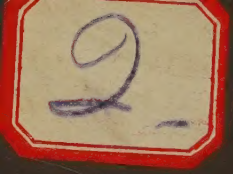
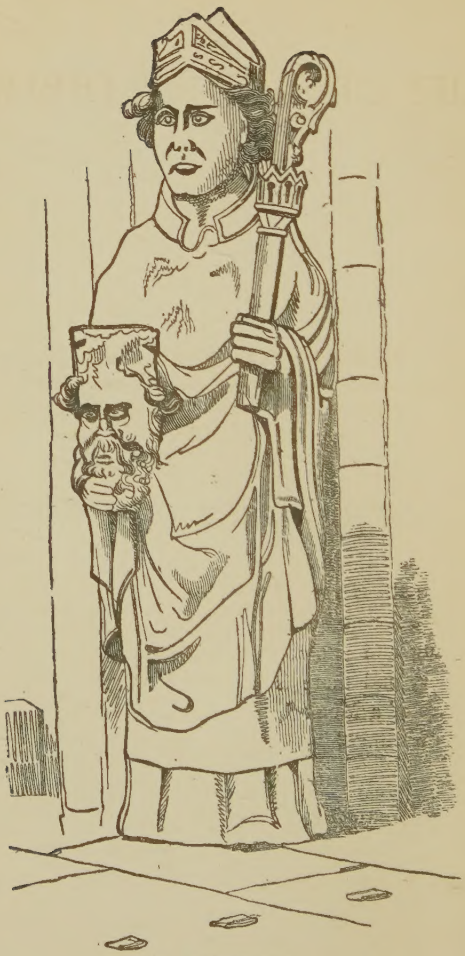


PARISH LIBRARY
SAN JOSE.
ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH.

LIFE OF SAINT CUTHBERT.



ST. CUTHBERT.
From a Statue in Durham Cathedral.

PARISH LIBRARY
SAN JOSE.
ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH

LIFE OF SAINT CUTHBERT

BY THE

RIGHT REV. EDWARD CONSITT,

DOMESTIC PRELATE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIII., PROVOST OF THE CHAPTER OF HEXHAM AND NEWCASTLE, VICAR CAPITULAR.

ALMA COLLEGE
270.05
LIBRARY
C972
Alma, California

Salve, Pater Patriæ, Cuthberte, vir inclyte salve.
O Pater, O Clemens pastor! Adesto mihi
Ut placet et nosti Pater auxiliare petenti
Quæso memento mei, dulcis amice Dei.

LONDON: BURNS & OATES, LTD.
NEW YORK: CATHOLIC PUBLICATION SOC. CO.
1887

4436

TO

MY FELLOW PRIESTS,

The Clergy, Secular and Regular.

OF THE

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle,

WHO, BY THE SPECIAL TOKENS OF THEIR CONFIDENCE AND AFFECTION, HAVE ESTABLISHED A CLAIM UPON HIM WHICH HE CAN NEVER FORGET, BUT WHICH HE CAN NEVER REPAY, THIS LIFE OF OUR GLORIOUS PATRON SAINT IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY THEIR FRIEND AND FAITHFUL SERVANT IN CHRIST,

EDWARD PROVOST CONSITT.

PREFACE.

THE History of the Saints of God's Church does not cease with their lives. They are buried in peace, but their memory lives on for all time; and their sacred relics, after death, oftentimes exert an influence, and produce events, and have a history, greater and more striking than anything which their actual lives accomplished. Their bodies are exposed in costly shrines, and placed under the altars, or in the Confessionals of some majestic basilica which has been built to honour them. Or some great city rises on the spot where they repose, and is called by their name; and the lives and fortunes of a whole people, the progress and prosperity of nations

become linked with and dependent upon the existence in their midst of the sacred relics of some Saint who, during life, was, perchance, but little known beyond the circle of his immediate surroundings. Of none is this more true than of the venerable St. Cuthbert. The events of his career are few, and mostly hidden. Though he laboured during several years as a Missionary and a Bishop, yet the greater part of his life was spent in the solitude and obscurity of his Monastery at Mailros and Holy Island, or in the little cell on the wave-beaten rock of Farne. Contrasted with his great contemporary, St. Wilfrid, the mark he made upon the age in which he lived was small and insignificant; but since his death, what English Saint has so impressed his memory upon the hearts of the people? What other name has exercised so wonderful an influence on the condition of the great northern counties? For upwards of six hundred

years the history of his sacred relics is the history of ancient Northumbria. To the mere temporary presence of the precious treasure of his Body we owe the Church at Lindisfarne, a hundred other Churches up and down this north country, the ancient See of Chester-le-Street, and, last of all, the stately Cathedral and City of Durham, and the almost regal power and wealth of its princely See.

Such is the Saint the features of whose life I have attempted to record in the following pages.

This Memoir of St. Cuthbert was undertaken at the request of the late Bishop Bewick, to commemorate the 12th Centenary of the death of the Saint.

It is intended to supply a want felt by many—a Life of the Patron of the Diocese, in a popular form and at a moderate cost.

We are indebted to Ven. Bede for

nearly all we know of St. Cuthbert's life, and I have not scrupled to borrow freely from his pages. In my quotations from his works I have made use of the accurate translation made in 1853 by the Rev. Jos. Stevenson.

Other writers frequently referred to are the "Anonymous Author," who wrote about A.D. 700; Reginald, the monk of Durham, who flourished in the latter half of the 12th century; and Symeon, the historian of the Church of Durham.

The Life of St. Cuthbert, by Archbishop Eyre, and Raine's *St. Cuthbert* and his *History of North Durham*, have been consulted, and have been of much use to me.

I have not thought it necessary to load my pages with references, but here and there the authority for any particular statement is furnished in a note.

After finishing a rather rough sketch of the work during a vacation spent in

Holy Island, I looked forward to the winter months, anticipating that I should find leisure to recast the whole, and render it more fit for publication. The lamented death of Bishop Bewick, and my election as Vicar Capitular, destroyed my hopes, and I am compelled to let my MS. go to the press with all its imperfections on its head.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

DEDICATION, ... v

PREFACE, ... vii

MAILROS.

CHAP.

I. Birth and Parentage of St. Cuthbert—Enters the Monastery of Mailros, . 3

II. Rule of St. Columba, ... 19

III. St. Cuthbert goes to Ripon—Entertains an Angel, ... 23

IV. Returns to Mailros — His Sickness—Death of St. Boisil, ... 25

V. Is made Prior of Mailros—Missionary Labours, ... 28

VI. Visits Coldingham and the Country of the Picts, ... 31

LINDISFARNE.

VII. Introduction of Christianity into the North—St. Oswald and St. Aidan, . 41

VIII. Description of the Island of Lindisfarne, now Holy Island, ... 48

IX. St. Cuthbert made Prior of Lindisfarne, 56

X. Begins a Solitary Life in St. Cuthbert's Island, ... 64

FARNE.

XI. Retires to Farne, ... 69

XII. Companionship with the Wild Birds on Farne, ... 76

XIII. Visits the Abbess Elfleda at Coquet Island, ... 83

EPISCOPATE.

CHAP.		PAGE
XIV.	Elected Bishop,	91
XV.	His Consecration at York,	94
XVI.	His life as Bishop—Labours and Miracles,	96
XVII.	Death of King Egfrid.	106
XVIII.	St. Cuthbert and St. Herbert,	111
XIX.	Visits the Abbess Verca at Tynemouth,	119
XX.	Returns to Farne,	121

LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

XXI.	Last Illness and Death, as related by the Prior Herefrid,	129
XXII.	His Body is taken to Lindisfarne,	143
XXIII.	His grave is opened, and the Body of the Saint found entire and incorrupt,	145
XXIV.	The Danes land on the North Coast. They plunder the Monastery of Lindisfarne,	147
XXV.	Attempted Flight to Ireland,	155
XXVI.	The Wanderers find shelter at Craike—Guthlake proclaimed King,	158

CHESTER-LE-STREET.

XXVII.	Episcopal See founded at Chester-le-Street,	163
XXVIII.	Second Flight. The Body of the Saint taken to Ripon,	166

DURHAM.

XXIX.	The Bishops and Monks leave Ripon and settle at Durham,	171
XXX.	Flight to Lindisfarne,	176
XXXI.	Benedictine Monks introduced into Durham,	177
XXXII.	Building of Present Cathedral,	180

CHAP.		PAGE
XXXIII.	Translation of the Body of St. Cuthbert into the Present Cathedral, . . .	187
XXXIV.	Public Examination of the Body of the Saint, ...	195
XXXV.	The Feretory and Shrine, . . .	200
XXXVI.	The Episcopal See and Abbey Church, from 1083 to the Dissolution, . .	206
XXXVII.	Desecration of the Shrine, . . .	216
XXXVIII.	St. Cuthbert's Body placed in a new grave under the place where the Shrine stood, ...	223
XXXIX.	The Vault opened in the year 1827, .	224
XL.	Traditions as to the Removal of the Sacred Relics—	
	1. The Secular Tradition, . .	226
	2. The Benedictine Tradition, . .	229
XLI.	Festival of St. Cuthbert in 1448 and 1887—a Contrast, ...	240

MAILROS.

O venerable pile ! from out the womb
Thou springest of the old majestic past
Ages of Faith, which daily from the heart
Of this dear land with lingering steps depart
Furling the mighty shadows that they cast.

MAILROS.

Chapter I.

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE OF ST. CUTHBERT—ENTERS THE MONASTERY OF MAILROS.

OF all the valleys of Scotland, that which is watered by the Tweed's "fair river, broad and deep," is the most interesting, if not the most beautiful. The river, which, many think, rivals the Rhine in picturesqueness and variety, rises near the north-west extremity of Tweeddale on the borders of Lanarkshire, flows to the town of Peebles, and in its impetuous course is swollen by many smaller streams, celebrated in Border minstrelsy. Thence through richly-wooded banks, whose heights are crowned by a rampart of ancient border pele-towers, it pursues a more easterly course by Melrose, Kelso, and Coldstream, till it falls into the sea at Tweedmouth. Everywhere its banks are

most fertile and beautiful, but in the neighbourhood of Melrose grandeur is combined with richness. The view from Bemerside hill, which overlooks the whole scene, is most striking in extent and loveliness. The eye wanders over an immense plain dotted with villages and hamlets,—through which the noble river flows along a diversified stretch of soft landscape, making many curves and windings,—while from the water edge rise up here a dense clump of dark pines, there steep and verdant slopes, to which the bold summits of a line of lofty hills form a majestic background. At one extremity of this plain, not far from the ancient village of Mailros, but on the opposite bank, the river Leader, a tributary stream, empties itself into the Tweed. Here, on the grassy side of the Lammermoor hills, which slope down to the river, on the night of the 31st of August, in the year of our Lord 651, a young shepherd boy was watching his master's sheep, and engaged, as was his wont, in prayer, when on a sudden a glorious vision burst on his view. He saw the sky, which

had been intensely dark, broken by a silvery track of light, upon which a troop of angels descended from heaven, and again ascended, bearing with them a resplendent soul, which they had gone to earth to meet.

This youth was Cuthbert, the future Patron Saint of Durham, and the happy soul escorted by angels that of the great St. Aidan, the Apostle of Bernicia and the first Bishop of Lindisfarne, who on that night had breathed his last in his little cell at the west end of the church in the royal city of Bamborough.

This vision was the turning-point in the life of Cuthbert, for from this moment, impressed with the vanity of all earthly things, and emulous of the glorious termination of a Saint's career, he resolved to renounce the world and consecrate himself wholly to God in the Monastic state; and we next meet with him at the gate of the Monastery of Mailros, where he arrived mounted on a charger, lance in hand, and attended by an esquire.

Before crossing the threshold of the cloister with him it will interest my readers to be told something about the early life of

the young postulant and the place of his choice, its situation, its founders, and the great memories which gather round it.

We know nothing for certain of the birth and parentage of Cuthbert. Though many centuries later, attempts were made to claim him as a native of Ireland, and to invest his infancy with a halo of romance, yet, from the silence of his early biographers and contemporary writers, we cannot attach much credence to this story. It is most probable that he was born in Lauderdale, a district then annexed to Northumbria, which had just been delivered by the saintly King Oswald from the yoke of the Mercians and Britons, and near to the spot where the Leader mingles its waters with the Tweed, and where we first meet him as a boy, watching the flocks on the mountain side. But though we find him thus employed, we must not conclude that he was of poor extraction. His family was probably of the rank of those vassals to whom, as Ven. Bede tells us, the great Saxon lords gave the care of their vast flocks on the extensive downs

or commons where the shepherds lived, day and night, in the open air, with merely the shelter of a projecting rock or hillock, as is still done by the shepherds on the Cheviots and the Grampians.

His parents must have died when he was a child, for we learn from Ven. Bede, that he was brought up from his boyhood by a holy woman (named Kenspid), who acted as his foster-mother, and for whom he ever retained an affectionate remembrance, and whom he often visited. He was probably indebted to this saintly nurse for the devotion and piety which were conspicuous in him from infancy. Symeon of Durham says of him, "that his whole conversation from his childhood was in heaven, and that in his youth he imitated the life of an angel". "The story of his youth reads," says the historian of the monks of the west, "like that of an English boy of our own day," and goes to establish his Saxon origin. He was a ringleader in all athletic sports, and excelled his playmates in running, wrestling, jumping, and other boyish games. With all this exuberance of high spirits and

physical prowess, he always retained his innocence, and was noted for his good disposition. His venerable biographer tells, on the authority of Bishop Trunwine, who had it from Cuthbert himself, a charming anecdote showing how open he was to religious impressions, and which was prophetic of his after career. One day a number of boys, of whom he was one, were engaged wrestling in a meadow, when suddenly a child of the age of three years, as it would appear, ran up to Cuthbert, and with all the gravity of old age, began to exhort him not to indulge in these idle sports. Cuthbert having paid no attention to this admonition, the little fellow threw himself on the ground, and, with tears running down his cheeks, exhibited signs of the greatest grief. Some of his companions ran to console him, and Cuthbert also tried to comfort him, upon which he exclaimed, "Why will you behave thus, so contrary to your rank, O Cuthbert, most holy prelate and priest? It becomes not you to sport among children; you whom the Lord has consecrated to be a teacher of virtue to your

elders." When Cuthbert heard these words, he received them with fixed attention, and soothing the sorrowing child with affectionate kindness, he resolved henceforth to forsake these vain sports, and returning home, he began to be more grave in his deportment from that time forth, and more manly in disposition.

From this date (he was now eight years of age) Cuthbert gave himself unreservedly to the service of God. He withdrew more and more from his companions, and from the pastimes in which he had taken so much delight, and spent many hours in the day and at night in solitude and prayer. By little and little his affections were weaned from all earthly things, and inflamed with the love of those that were heavenly. In reward for his docility to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, "assuredly teaching him in his inmost heart," many miraculous graces were vouchsafed to his prayers. On one occasion he was seized with a sudden and violent pain in his knee, which caused it to swell to such a size that he was unable to

stand or move. His attendants had carried him out of doors into the open air, and whilst reclining in the sun, a horseman, clothed in white garments, "piously believed to be an angel," rode up, and courteously requested hospitality from Cuthbert. On Cuthbert excusing himself on account of his infirmity, the stranger sprang from his horse, and after carefully examining his knee, prescribed a poultice of warm milk and flour, and then mounting his horse rode away. Cuthbert applied the remedy which had been recommended, and in a few days was restored to his usual health. Then Cuthbert knew that it was an angel whom God had sent to heal him.

The following event seems to belong to this period of St. Cuthbert's youth, and to have occurred before he entered the Monastery of Mailros.

Some of the monks of the Monastery of Tiningham, situated on the banks of the river Tine, a stream which falls into the sea north of Dunbar, were engaged in steering some rafts which contained a supply of wood for

their use. On arriving opposite the monastery, they were endeavouring to draw them on shore, when on a sudden a tempestuous wind arose, driving them out seawards. The monks on shore, who witnessed this disaster from the monastery, immediately launched some boats with the view of assisting those who were toiling on board the rafts; but being overpowered by the force of the current and the violence of the storm, their efforts were unavailing. Cuthbert happened to be standing on the opposite bank, surrounded by a number of people, who, when they saw the rafts carried out to sea till almost out of sight, began to jeer at the monks who had ventured to introduce amongst them a new and unknown rule of life, and who deserved this punishment. Cuthbert at once checked the reproaches of the scoffers, exclaiming: "What are you doing, brethren, in speaking evil against those you see hurried away towards death? Would it not be more like men, were you to pray to the Lord for their safety, than thus to rejoice at their peril?" The only

reply he got from these rude and churlish people was: "Let no one pray for them; may God have pity on none of them, who have taken away our old worship, and no one knows how to observe the new!"* Cuthbert, not heeding them, at once fell upon his knees, and, bowing his head to the ground, prayed earnestly to God; and at once the violence of the winds being turned towards the land, the rafts were brought in safety to the beach. On seeing this the rustics blushed for their unbelief, and extolled, with loud applause, the faith of the youthful servant of God.

Once whilst on a solitary journey in winter, he lost his way amongst the moors and turned his horse's steps towards a lonely farmstead. The woman of the house welcomed him warmly, and earnestly besought him to allow her to prepare dinner for him. This, however, he refused, for it was Friday, and it was then the custom to fast on that day till evening, in honour of our Lord's Passion.

* This is a proof that the old heathenism still lingered in Northumbria, and of the bitter feelings of the populace towards those that opposed it.

He again set forth on his journey, but was overtaken by night on the mountains, and was forced to take shelter in a deserted shepherd's hut, a shealing now almost in ruins.

Though quite exhausted with hunger and the fatigue of a long day's wandering, he tied up his horse to the wall, and having fed it with a handful of dry grass which had been blown off the roof, he betook himself to prayer. Whilst he was thus engaged, his steed, nibbling at the thatch of the roof of the cottage, pulled out a bundle wrapped in a linen cloth, in which was found some bread and meat. Cuthbert, giving thanks to God, divided the bread, and gave one-half to his horse, reserving the rest for his own refreshment.

The Monastery of Mailros, to which we must now turn our attention, was not on the same site as the one whose graceful ruins still attract the wonder and admiration of all who visit them. About two miles lower down the river, the Tweed makes an abrupt and semi-circular sweep, almost in the form of a

horse-shoe, and in the centre of the peninsula thus formed stood the Monastery of old Mailros. It was one of the offshoots from Lindisfarne, which were founded by St. Oswald and St. Aidan about the year 635. Its name is said to be derived from its position—an open space of green turf in the midst of the surrounding forest, and nearly surrounded by water — from two Celtic words — *mul*, signifying bare, and *rhos*, a promontory. Its first Abbot was the "gentle" Eata, one of the twelve Saxon boys who were trained by St. Aidan in his Cathedral School at Lindisfarne. Under him was the Prior Boisil, or Boswell, the fame of whose sanctity mainly influenced Cuthbert in the choice of this monastery.

I may as well here glance at the after-fate of this house.

After having flourished for two hundred years, under a race of distinguished abbots —many of whom became canonised saints —the monastery was burnt down by Kenneth, King of the Scots, in 839, in one of his

many invasions of the Saxon territory. It remained in ruins for several years, during the Danish inroads into the North; but the buildings were probably restored and again inhabited before 875, for in that year it became one of the resting-places of the Body of St. Cuthbert after the removal from Lindisfarne and during the seven years' weary pilgrimage, and it was from here that the coffin was said to have floated down the river to Tilmouth.

After it had laid waste for many years, we hear of it about 1073 as giving shelter for a short season to a few fugitive monks. They were led by Aldwine, Prior of Wincalcombe in Gloucestershire, who, in search of a holy and more mortified life, had induced two of his monks to accompany him to Northumberland. They first came to Muncaceaster (Newcastle), and Bishop Walcher gave them the ruined Monastery of St. Paul at Jarrow-on-the-Tyne, where, in the midst of many privations, suffering much from cold and hunger, they began to celebrate the divine offices of the Church. From thence they

removed to Mailros, where they continued to lead severe lives, in monastic seclusion, until, in 1075, they were recalled by Bishop Walcher to Durham, and were soon after settled by the Bishop at Monkwearmouth, where they restored the ancient Monastery of Bennet Biscop which had been destroyed by the Danes. All that survived of the venerable Abbey of Mailros was a chapel dedicated to St. Cuthbert, which as late as the 15th century was a famous resort of pilgrims. The foundations of the wall, which enclosed the convent on the land side, were standing in 1743, but all traces of the monastic buildings, and of the Chapel of St. Cuthbert, have been utterly destroyed. The names which still cling to various spots, such as "Chapel Knoll," and the "Holy Well," and the "Monk's ford" alone recall the memory of the venerable home of Boisil and Cuthbert. We learn from Symeon of Durham that Cuthbert's religious profession took place in 651, but nevertheless it is difficult to fix the chronology of his life. Some make him only fifteen years of age; but he was probably

considerably older.* It was a glorious day in the early autumn, such as is nowhere seen in such perfection as in the north of England. The setting sun was streaming through the dense foliage of the trees which hemmed in the monastery, lighting up the autumnal tints of colour which made the woods one blaze of beauty, and falling upon the golden locks and fair features of the young Saxon, who stood there waiting with downcast looks. It was a striking picture for the eyes of the venerable Boisil, who was standing in the doorway, to gaze upon. The countenance and whole bearing of the young postulant were but the reflection of the interior purity and serenity of his spotless soul. His biographers love to dwell upon the beauty of his mind and form. "He was

* Unfortunately Bede nowhere gives us Cuthbert's age. He elsewhere calls him at this time a young man, and says his life reached to old age. Cuthbert resigned his bishopric in 686, and died in 687. He could hardly have been under sixty at that time. This would place his birth in the year 626, and make him twenty-four when he joined the monastery at Mailros. Skene's *Lett. Scot.* ii. 205.

endowed," one tells us, "with a fairness and beauty beyond all description, a charming sweetness of countenance, and a most 'captivating address';" another says of him that he was "angelic in looks, refined in speech, saintly in works, vigorous in body, excelling in intellect, wise in counsel, Catholic in faith, and gifted in an eminent degree with the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity".

As soon as he set eyes upon him, the Prior Boisil recognised in Cuthbert the future Saint. "Behold a servant of God," he exclaimed to those who stood near him. Accordingly he at once conceived a great affection for his pupil, and devoted himself, with tender solicitude, to train up to the heights of Christian perfection this promising young plant. The youthful novice repaid his care, and threw himself with impassioned ardour into all the observances of monastic life. Being robust in body and of unbroken strength, he applied himself with unflagging zeal to the works prescribed by rule, such as reading, manual labour, watching and prayer, and in a short time surpassed in fervour

all his fellow-novices. He carefully abstained from everything that could intoxicate; but was not able to practise great abstinence from food, lest he should become unfitted for his necessary work.

Chapter II.

RULE OF ST. COLUMBA.

MAILROS had received from St. Aidan, its founder, the rule established at Iona by St. Columba. The monks of St. Columba came from Ireland; they were a branch of the order as it had been established there by St. Patrick, borrowed by him from the western monasteries, which he had personally visited both in Italy and Gaul. Though differing in some details, it was similar in its essential features to the constitutions of the great order of St. Benedict, and the other monastic houses then flourishing in the Church.

The monks took solemn vows and were

tonsured, not on the top of the head, but from ear to ear, on the fore part of the head. They consisted of three classes.

The first division were the seniors, who formed the choir monks. Their day was occupied in saying Mass, chanting the canonical hours, and carrying on the services of the church, in reading and transcribing the Holy Scriptures, and in meditation and prayer at stated times. Holy Mass was solemnly sung on all Sundays and Festivals, and on other occasions appointed by the Abbot. The whole community received Holy Communion from the hands of the officiating priest, or from the Bishop, when he was present. Those monks who were stronger and fitted for labour, were termed the working brethren, and corresponded to the lay-brothers of after-times. They cultivated the farms, and took care of the cattle and sheep, were the cooks, and manufactured the various articles required for personal or domestic use. One of these brothers held the office of Cellarer (*pincerna*), and another that of Baker (*pistor*).

The third class consisted of the youth who

were under instruction, and were termed *Alumni*, or pupils.

The dress of the monks consisted of a white habit (*tunica*), over which they wore a *camilla*, consisting of a body and hood, made of wool, and of the natural colour of the material. When working or travelling they wore sandals, which were usually removed when sitting down to meat. Their food consisted of bread,—sometimes made of barley—milk, fish, eggs; and in Iona they appear to have also used seals' flesh. On Sundays and Festivals, and on the arrival of a guest, an addition, probably of flesh meat such as beef or mutton, was made to the principal meal. An important feature of this monastic system, as of all others, was the penitential system to which the monks were subjected. They fasted on all Wednesdays and Fridays, and during Lent, and it was a common custom for many to pass a certain time with the body entirely immersed in water, whilst reciting the whole or part of a psalter. Special spiritual exercises or retreats, as now, were made under the direction of a

spiritual director, or "soul-friend". After the commission of any offence, the penitent was required to confess, on his knees, his fault before the community in Chapter assembled, and to perform such penance as the Abbot prescribed.

It is hardly necessary to add that the inmates of Mailros and Lindisfarne, as well as of Iona from which they sprung, were united in *faith* with the universal Church. Unhappily there were two points of discipline upon which they differed from the rest of Christendom—the observance of the great Easter festival and the shape of the tonsure. The latter difference would have been of no moment, had it not been made a subject of contention in conjunction with the more important question of the proper date of celebrating Easter. These two points led to much ill-feeling and partial separation between the Celtic monks and the missionaries from Rome.

Such was the rule followed in the monastery in which Cuthbert was trained. Bede does not tell us when he was ordained priest; but as he received the tonsure from the hands of

Boisil, at the time of his religious profession,* it is probable that he was made a priest shortly before succeeding that venerable man in his office of Prior.

Chapter III.

ST. CUTHBERT GOES TO RIPON—ENTERTAINS AN ANGEL.

AFTER spending a few quiet but fruitful years in the peaceful cloisters of Mailros, Cuthbert was transferred from the banks of the Tweed to the banks of the Ure.

In the year 661, King Alchfrid, the son of Oswin, founded a monastery at Ripon, and made it over to the Abbot Eata, who introduced the same monastic discipline which prevailed at Mailros. He took St. Cuthbert with him to Ripon, and appointed him guest-master, an office of great trust and responsibility, which shows the high estimation in which he was held. Only one event

* The anonymous monk says the tonsure was conferred on St. Cuthbert at Ripon, not in Mailros.

connected with the life of our Saint during his residence at Ripon has been handed down to us. In the discharge of his duties a special grace, more than once shared by other great servants of God, was conferred upon him, as a testimony to his sanctity. He was privileged to entertain an angel, who came to the gate of the monastery in the guise of a pilgrim, through the frost and snow of a bleak winter's day. The humble monk received his visitor with most winning kindness, washed and kissed his feet—benumbed with cold—and warmed them by placing them on his bosom, and chafing them with his hands. Immediately after the office of Tierce was concluded in the chapel, and the meal-time was at hand, Cuthbert laid the table and invited his guest to partake of food, saying, "I beseech thee, brother, refresh thyself until I return with some new bread, for I expect it to be ready baked by this time". When he returned, he found that the stranger had disappeared, and no trace of his footsteps could be seen, though a recent fall of snow had covered the ground. The man of God,

greatly amazed and wondering inwardly, replaced the table in the inner apartment. On entering this room, he perceived the fragrance of a marvellous sweet perfume; and looking round, saw lying beside him three loaves yet warm, of unwonted whiteness and beauty. Trembling, he said within himself, "It was an angel of God whom I have received, who has come to feed, and not to be fed. Lo! he has brought such loaves as this earth cannot produce, for they surpass lilies in whiteness, roses in smell, and honey in flavour."

Chapter IV.

RETURNS TO MAILROS—HIS SICKNESS—DEATH OF ST. BOISIL.

HIS sojourn at Ripon was brief. Eata and his monks were driven out by the king to make way for St. Wilfrid, the champion of the Catholic rule as to the observance of Easter. Shortly after their return to Mailros (A.D. 664) a terrible epidemic broke out in Great Britain. So destructive were its

ravages that it was called the yellow plague. After well-nigh depopulating the southern coasts, it burst with great fury upon Northumbria. Amongst those who fell victims to this scourge were Tuda, the fourth Bishop of Lindisfarne,* and many of his monks. Both Cuthbert and the Prior Boisil were attacked by it. No sooner was Cuthbert's illness known to his brethren than the whole community passed the entire night in praying for his recovery. When told of their affection and charity, Cuthbert exclaimed, "Why am I lying here? It is not possible that God should refuse your prayers!" and demanding his staff and his shoes, he at once rose from his bed and speedily recovered his health, though his illness left behind effects which clung to him till his dying day.

It fared otherwise with the saintly Boisil, who, knowing that his end was near, called upon his beloved disciple Cuthbert to watch by his bedside, and, together with him, to

* Tuda was said to have died and been buried at Finchale, but there seems to be little foundation for this tradition.

read the Gospel of St. John, dividing it into seven parts,—one part for each of the seven days which he foretold should be his last. This circumstance recalls that most touching of all narratives, the death scene of the Ven. Bede, at Jarrow, seventy years later. St. John's Gospel was a special favourite with these saintly men of old. The copy which was read by Boisil and his pupil was long preserved at Durham, and that which St. Cuthbert carried with him in all his wanderings as Prior, Anchorite, and Bishop, and which was taken from his tomb in 1104, is now one of the most precious treasures of the library of the Jesuit Fathers at Stonyhurst.* During the familiar intercourse which took place during his illness between

* This precious relic was taken, probably at the time of the desecration of the shrine, out of the coffin of St. Cuthbert, where it had rested under the Saint's head (repertum sub capite Sancti Cuthberti). It was in the possession of Thomas Allen of Oxford before the year 1622, and afterwards came into the hands of Henry Lee, Earl of Lichfield, who gave it to the Rev. Thomas Phillips, the author of the life of Cardinal Pole. By him it was presented to the English Jesuit College at Liege in 1764, whence it was transferred in 1794 to Stonyhurst

the aged Prior and St. Cuthbert, Boisil foretold to his disciple all the events of his future life, and that he would one day be a Bishop. When the seven days were accomplished St. Boisil's soul entered into the joys of eternal life, and in long after years his relics were placed alongside those of his illustrious pupil and successor under the vaulted roof of the choir of the majestic Cathedral of Durham.

Chapter V.

IS MADE PRIOR OF MAILROS—MISSIONARY LABOURS.

AFTER Boisil's death Cuthbert was appointed to succeed him as Prior, and with the mantle of his office there descended upon his young disciple, not only his eminent wisdom and sanctity, but his missionary spirit and burning zeal and love for souls.

The vale of the Tweed and Ettrick is now celebrated for its rich pastoral beauty. A

modern writer thus describes it: "Agriculture has chosen its valleys for her favourite seat, and drainage and steam-power have turned sedgy marshes into farm and meadow. But to see the Lowlands as they were in Cuthbert's day, we must sweep away meadow and farm again, and replace them by vast solitudes, dotted here and there with clusters of wooden hovels and covered by boggy tracts, over which the traveller rode spear in hand, and eye kept cautiously about him." Such were the features of the region in which St. Cuthbert pursued his labours. He went forth from the monastery sometimes on horseback but more generally on foot. He spent whole days, often several weeks and even months, without returning to his monastery, in evangelising the poor scattered half-barbarous inhabitants, frequently detained in the wild mountains and in the almost inaccessible and impenetrable swamps, by dreadful storms of frost and snow, and exposed, with no other covering than the boughs of trees, to the inclemency of the long dark nights. He moved amongst the people like an angel,

preaching as much by the example of his saintly life as by his words. "So great," says the Ven. Bede, "was Cuthbert's skill in teaching, so vast was his power of loving persuasion, so striking was the light that beamed from his angelic countenance, that no one in his presence dared to conceal from him the hidden secrets of his heart, but each declared openly in confession what he had done amiss, and strove to wipe away the sins he had confessed, as the Saint commanded, with fruits worthy of repentance." This venerable historian gives us also a beautiful picture of the docility of the peasants, and their eagerness to hear the word of God. "It was the custom," he says, "in those days with the English people, when a clerk or priest came into a village, for all to gather together to hear the word of God, willingly hearkening to what was said, and still more willingly following up by works what they heard and understood." These missionary labours were not confined to the district round Mailros, but extended from the coast of Berwick to the shores of the Solway. The name of

Cuthbert still lives in the traditions of the lowlands, and is preserved in the numerous churches raised in his honour.

Chapter VI.

VISITS COLDINGHAM AND THE COUNTRY OF THE PICTS.

AMONGST the spots visited by Cuthbert was the Monastery of Coldingham. This famous monastery was one of those founded by St. Aidan and afterwards became a cell to the great Benedictine Monastery at Durham. It was built upon a high rock overhanging the sea, a short distance southward from the promontory of St. Abb's Head. The neck of land on which it was built stretches out into the ocean, and has on three sides perpendicular rocks of great elevation, against which the heavy billows of the North Sea dash with great force. The fourth side was cut off from the mainland by a high wall and deep trench. It was a double monastery—that occupied by the monks having been possibly on the

site upon which a later monastery was built—and St. Ebba, its first Abbess, from whom the promontory takes its name, ruled over separate communities of men and women. She was illustrious not only for her sanctity, but for her noble birth, being the sister of St. Oswald and Oswi, Kings of Northumbria. It has been said that, after first establishing a monastery at Ebchester, on the Derwent, she had, with the assistance of her brother, King Oswi, founded the Monastery of Coldingham. Hearing of the wondrous life and miracles of St. Cuthbert, the holy nun earnestly entreated the servant of God to pay her a visit. Cuthbert could not refuse "what the charity of God's handmaid so strongly requested," and remained at the monastery for several days. As was his wont, he spent a portion of the night in prayer, and for this purpose went forth when the brethren were asleep. A monk, who had noticed his departure, secretly followed him, and saw Cuthbert walk to the beach, and enter into the sea until the water reached to his arms and neck. He there spent a great

portion of the night in the praises of God—the rolling waves re-echoing the sound of his voice. When the dawn approached, he came out of the water, and, falling on his knees on the sands, concluded his prayers. A tradition still lingers amongst the peasantry on the coast that two otters came out from the rocks, licked his half-frozen feet, and wiped them with their hair. When this act was completed, Cuthbert gave them his blessing and dismissed them, while he returned to his monastery to join with the monks in chanting matins.

On his return to Mailros from Coldingham, he proceeded by sea to visit the Picts of Galloway. Setting sail with two of his brethren, he landed on the day after Christmas Day at a seaport in the territory of the Niduari — the people of Nithsdale — somewhere on the banks of the Dee, which falls into the Solway. Scarcely had they reached the shore when a wild tempest arose, which prevented them again putting to sea. For several days they suffered keenly from both cold and hunger. Cuthbert encouraged his

companions to trust to the good providence of God, which is never wanting to His servants. Instead of yielding to fatigue and want of sleep, he spent the whole night in prayer. On the eve of the festivity of the Epiphany, he most earnestly urged his fellow-travellers to join with him in earnest supplications to our Lord, calling upon Him to succour them in their peril — as of old He had opened a way for His people through the waters of the Red Sea, and fed them in the wilderness with food miraculously sent from heaven. "I believe," he said, "that if our faith fail not, He will not leave us fasting on this day which He Himself has vouchsafed to illustrate with so great and so many marvels of His majesty."

On the morning of the festival he led them to the base of a cliff where he had spent the watches of the night, and there they found three pieces of the flesh of a dolphin, as if cut by human hands and ready for cooking. Having appeased their hunger, they waited patiently for three days more, during which the storm still raged, and on

the fourth day launched their ship. On the spot where they had been storm-stayed, tradition tells us that a church was afterwards built, and the name Kirkcudbright—a royal Scottish borough—hands down to us a memorial of their visit.

On another occasion, with a young boy, his sole companion, he set out from the monastery on one of his missionary expeditions; and as they were travelling through a wild and lonely district, they were overtaken by the night, worn out with the fatigue of a long day's journey on foot. There being no means of obtaining refreshment, Cuthbert had recourse as usual to God in secret prayer. It was revealed to him that his prayer was heard, and full of gratitude for God's unfailing goodness, he said to his companion, "Learn, my son, to have faith and hope in the Lord, for no one who faithfully serves God can ever perish with hunger". As he spoke, an eagle flew past and rested upon the bank of a river which was near. It had caught a large fish, which it yielded to the young boy. Cuthbert, with that tender compassion to all God's

creatures, which was another feature of his gentle nature, ordered him to give the bird its share of the feast. The young lad did as he was commanded; and cutting the fish into two parts, gave one to the eagle, and brought back the remainder, upon which he and his master refreshed themselves "with a most agreeable feast".

One more story connected with his apostolic life, and we shall pass from scenes so interesting and so instructing. Once, in his wanderings through the western districts of Berwickshire, he came to the house of a certain devout woman named Kenspid, who, as mentioned before, had been his nurse from the first years of his boyhood, and whom he often visited, not only through the affection he bore to her, but on account of her virtuous life. Whilst he was preaching to the people of the village in which she resided, and which is supposed to be Wrangholm, between the Leader and the Tweed, a fire broke out, and raged with such violence, owing to the prevalence of a high wind, that it endangered not only the house of his foster-mother, but all the houses in the

street. St. Cuthbert, seeing the imminent danger to which those whom he loved were exposed, fell upon the ground upon his face, and whilst he prayed the wind suddenly changed, and the flames were quenched.

St. Cuthbert was now upwards of thirty-two years old, and had worn the religious habit for twelve years. They had been years spent in the exact observance of all the rules of the monastic life, and sanctified by the fervent exercise of the evangelical virtues of poverty, humility, obedience, and an eminent spirit of prayer, and by the laborious active duties of an apostolic life. He was now to enter upon a new sphere, involving a change not so much of action as of place. He was appointed Prior of the Monastery of Lindisfarne.

LINDISFARNE.

Oh, happy in their soul's high solitude
Who commune thus with God,
And not with earth.

—Cardinal Newman.

To him the mourners came,
And sinners bound by Satan. At his touch
Their chains fell from them light as summer dust:
Each word he spake was as a sacrament
Clothed with God's grace.

—Aubrey de Vere.

LINDISFARNE.

Chapter VII.

INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO THE NORTH—ST. OSWALD AND ST. AIDAN.

BEFORE entering upon the history of St. Cuthbert's connection with Lindisfarne, it will be necessary to give some account of that celebrated monastery and church, and of the introduction of Christianity into the north of England.

In the year 617, Edwin succeeded to the throne of Northumbria. He and his people were still pagans, but in the 11th year of his reign he married the daughter of the Catholic King, Ethelbert of Kent. The young Queen was accompanied to York by St. Paulinus, whom Archbishop Justus of Canterbury had raised to the episcopal dignity. This holy

Bishop by his preaching converted Edwin, and on Easter Sunday, in the year 627, the King was baptised at York in the Church of St. Peter the Apostle, which he himself had built of timber. His subjects in the provinces of Deira and Bernicia followed the example of their monarch, and were received into the Church in great numbers by St. Paulinus, who was made Archbishop of York—the pallium being sent to him by Pope Honorius I., with letters addressed to him and to the King. Before the letter of the Roman Pontiff reached York, King Edwin had been slain in the battle of Hatfield, in Yorkshire, in October of 633, and the pagan King Penda of Mercia and the apostate Cadwalla had divided the kingdom of Northumbria between them. By their influence the infant Church was destroyed, and St. Paulinus was obliged to seek safety in flight. After a year, in which the land had been given up to paganism, and was tyrannised over by the savage Cadwalla, all eyes were turned to Oswald, who, by the death of his brother Eanfrid, had become

the rightful heir to the Northumbrian throne. Oswald was now thirty years old. Since the death of his father Ethelfrid, the grandson of Ina, and almost since his childhood, he had resided in exile with many of the nobles attached to his race, and had been trained in the Catholic faith by the monks of Iona. There is something extremely beautiful and noble about the character of this truly saintly Saxon King. He was gentle and humble and chaste, overflowing with kindness to the poor and distressed. "He was a prince of men, one born to attract a general enthusiasm of admiration, reverence, and love." Oswald advanced into Northumbria at the head of an army, small indeed in numbers, but strengthened with the faith of Christ. He encountered the overwhelming force of Cadwalla at a place called Denis Burn—that is, the brook of Denis, not far from Hexham, and near to the Picts' wall on the north. On the night of the battle Oswald erected, with his own hands, on the summit of the hill which was occupied by his followers, a large wooden cross. Standing before this emblem

of our salvation, he thus addressed his soldiers: "Let us all kneel and together beseech the true and living God Almighty to defend us from the haughty and fierce enemy, for He knows that our cause is just, and that we fight for the safety of our nation". The army spent the night in prayer, and with the first dawn of day advanced towards the enemy, and obtained a complete and glorious victory.

The place where the battle was fought was henceforth called Hefenfelth, or the Heavenly Field. A chapel dedicated to St. Oswald marks the spot, a little to the north of Hexham, and of the railway from Newcastle to Carlisle. For centuries afterwards the brethren of the Church of Hexham were accustomed to make a yearly pilgrimage to this place, and on the spot where Oswald had reared the standard of the Holy Cross, said Mass for the soul of the great Saxon King. In the time of St. Bedua a church dedicated to St. Oswald was built here by the monks of Hexham.

As soon as Oswald was established on his

father's throne, his first thought was to bring back to his people the precious treasure of the faith which they had lost. It was natural that he should turn to that spot where he had spent his youth and to those who had been his instructors in his exile. He therefore earnestly entreated the monks of Iona to send him some holy Bishop or missionary to preach to his subjects. They at once complied with his request and after a short delay, caused by the failure of the first monk that was sent, St. Aidan was appointed to undertake the great work of the conversion of Northumbria. This holy monk is described by Bede as a man of singular meekness and piety and moderation, zealous for the cause of God. If we are to believe the ancient Irish records, before joining the community at Iona, he had enrolled himself in his youth among the religious of the Island Monastery of St. Senanus at Inniscattery on the Shannon.

There is another venerable tradition which says that before he left Ireland he was raised to the Episcopate, and in the old register of the Diocese of Clogher, he is

named among the Bishops of that see. Dr. John Lynch, in his MS. History of the Irish Bishops, as also Ware and Cotton, following the testimony of this authentic record, have placed St. Aidan fifth in succession from St. Molaisse, whose death is recorded in the annals of Ulster in the year 563.* St. Aidan was united with the Catholic Church throughout the world in obedience to the See of Rome, but owing to their isolation from the rest of Christendom, since the Roman conquest of Britain, he had retained, in common with his brethren at Iona, the ancient cycle which the Irish Church had received with St. Patrick. It was the cycle followed at Rome at the time he was sent by Pope Celestine to evangelise the Irish, but during the two centuries which had elapsed since then, the Roman Church had gradually perfected the Easter computation.

"It was," as Archbishop Moran pertinently observes, "the astronomical science and not the faith of Ireland and St. Aidan that was at fault." In spite of these facts, it is some-

* Archbishop Moran, *Irish Saints.*

what disheartening to see with what persistency Protestant writers try to persuade themselves and their readers that there were doctrinal differences between the Celtic and the Roman Churches.

It was in the summer of the year 635 that Aidan arrived at the court of Oswald. He was cordially welcomed by the saintly King, who gave him the choice of any spot he wished to select for his episcopal see from the Tees to the Frith of Forth. St. Aidan chose for his cathedral and home the Island of Lindisfarne, now called Holy Island. Many reasons, no doubt, weighed with the Saint in selecting the spot. In the first place, it was protected by its insular position from sudden attacks. Secondly, it was within a short sail of the royal castle crowning the grey cliff of Bamborough, built by King Ina.

This fortress rock, so striking an object in the view from the heugh or platform of basalt, below which the Church and Monastery of Lindisfarne were sheltered, impregnable by position and strengthened by art, was then the chief residence of the Kings of

Northumbria. But another reason would have special influence on the mind of Aidan. Here he would be able, in the intervals of his Episcopal labours, to find that solitude and retirement so dear to the heart of every true religious; and the outward features of the island, lying bare and desolate in the German Ocean, would constantly remind him of his first home, on the waters of the Shannon, and of the sea-girt Iona, of which the glories were now to be perpetuated on Anglo-Saxon soil.

Chapter VIII.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ISLAND OF LINDISFARNE, NOW HOLY ISLAND.

LINDISFARNE, or Holy Island, has often been described, and is well known to many of my readers, but for the sake of those for whom I mainly write, and to whom the costly works of Raine and Eyre are not accessible, and because it is a pleasure to me

to speak of it, and that I have some claim to do so, I will endeavour to describe the salient features of the place and its surroundings.

Let my readers picture to themselves a long, low, flat length of land, girt at its southern extremity by a belt of basaltic rock, while at the northern end a long projecting neck of sand stretches far into the sea, lying off the eastern coast of Northumbria, opposite Beal, about seven miles south of Berwick. It is not always an island, for twice every day it is accessible on foot. The pathway through the sands, which has been traversed by the feet of holy men and innumerable pilgrims, and which extends below Beal Farm to the middle of the island, is three miles in length. During low water, a wide and dreary waste of sand, weird and desolate, across which the northern blasts sweep irresistibly, and where no object meets the eye but the passing sea-gull, nor the ear but the loud roar of the billows breaking on the rocks which line the north-eastern shore, forms a fitting approach to a spot so sacred and venerable. Nearly

half the island is now under cultivation; the rest is covered with sand blown into fantastic shapes by many a wintry storm, through which the long thick wiry bent shoots up luxuriantly.

The length of the island from north to south, including a peninsula called the Snook, is about two miles and three quarters: its breadth from east to west a mile and a half. The harbour is extensive and safe except during heavy gales of wind from the westward.

The town of Holy Island consists of a few irregular streets branching off from the market-place. These small streets had, all of them, names from an early period; viz., Prior Rawe, Mary-gate, Piet-hill, North-street, Cross-gate, Church-lane, Crosse-market, Palace-gate, Fenkle-street, Lea-sheite, Middle-sheite, Smales-garth, Combs-sheite. These names occur in the Roll of 1592. Broad-street, South-baggot, North-baggot (Back-gate), East-baggot, Baggot-heugh, Cuddy's-wall, St. Combs, Coldingham-walls, &c., &c., are mentioned in a survey of the

property of the Dean and Chapter of Durham in 1622. St. Combs was originally a Chapel dedicated to St. Columba, but it is difficult to fix the locality of this Chapel and of the Cemetery originally attached to it.

The chief objects of interest on the island are the fine ruins of the Priory, of the early English Parish Church, and of the Castle. For a detailed description of these I must refer my readers to Raine's *North Durham.* In one point he seems to be inaccurate. He states that there are no remains of a period anterior to the Conquest, save perhaps a small carved stone built up in the staircase of the north-west tower of the Priory Church. But undoubtedly the lower portions of the walls of the choir, and probably the foundations of the apse, and the walls of the north transept and aisle are of Saxon workmanship, possibly remnants of the original Saxon Church pulled down to make way for its Norman successor.

It is impossible for any Catholic to visit this spot without being deeply moved, for here was the cradle of northern Christian-

ity; here stood the first church of the whole district between York and Edinburgh; here, for well-nigh 900 years, a body of holy religious served God in solitude and prayer; and from here went forth the saintly Bishops and zealous missionaries who preached the faith to our wild and barbarous ancestors, and subdued the fierce Northmen to the sweet yoke of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I may be pardoned for speaking of myself in connection with a place so dear to me, and so intimately associated with the whole of my priestly life.

On my first leaving college, the island formed a portion of my extensive parish, and during the happy years of youthful enthusiasm, I constantly visited it in every state of the tide, and in every variety of season. Sometimes trudging across the sands barefooted, like the pilgrims of old, sometimes on horseback, or in a carriage or boat. More than once I have been called to attend a sick or dying parishioner when the night was so dark that I could only trace the safe track by feeling my way from post to post, placed as

a guide to the inexperienced traveller, often with the water up to my saddle-girths, or the axles of the carriage wheels. Since then my connection with the island has never ceased, at one time renting a cottage there for several years; and now I am writing these lines under my own roof, within sight of the ruins of the venerable Abbey Church—

> "A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,
> Placed on the margin of the isle".

In the life of St. Godric of Finchale, written by Reginald of Durham, it is narrated that he was accustomed in his wanderings as a pedlar to visit Holy Island, and travel over the whole of the ground consecrated by the feet of St. Cuthbert, kneeling and kissing the spots pointed out by the monks, where the Saint himself had knelt and prayed. Following in the footsteps of the hermit of Finchale, I too have traversed again and again every inch of this sacred soil; walking and reciting the canonical hours on the stretch of smooth sand which extends along the west and north-east shores, and

where, as Ven. Bede tells us, St. Cuthbert spent the nights in singing the praises of God: or watching the long waves of the German Ocean slowly advancing and receding, or, in wild fury, dashing their foam over the rocks: or lying on the smooth soft green turf which carpets the Heugh, and gazing, with straining eyes, upon the distant Farne, where the Saint gave up his pure soul to God.

I love the people, bereft, alas! of the precious gift of the faith, but sturdy and independent, honest, intelligent, and kind-hearted, "plain folk and primitive, made courteous by traditions old and a cerulean sky"; and to me the place possesses an indescribable charm, not merely for the memories which cling around it, but I love the—

"Beauty and solitude, and simple ways,
The quiet shining hills, the long lythe wave,
Now white-fringed, fretting into rough curved bays,
Now whirling smoothly where the flat sand gave
A couch, whereon to end its stormy days".

The island is commonly said to derive its original name from the Lindis or Low, a small river which flows from the Cheviots, through the sands which separate the island

from the mainland; but probably its true derivation, or rather that of the territory of which it forms a part, is the land between the river Lindis and the Warren, easily convertible into Farren, a river falling into the sea north of Bamborough. Bede always speaks of it as the Lindisfarnensian Island, or the island in the Lindisfarnensian territory. Its present name of Holy Island it owes to the veneration which our forefathers in the faith entertained for the saintly lives and glorious deaths of the confessors and martyrs who had made the island illustrious.

We know nothing of the fabric either of church or monastery erected by St. Aidan. It could only have been a temporary edifice, for St. Finan, his successor in the Bishopric, built a new church, more suitable for a cathedral, and after the manner of Scotland.* It was formed of wooden planks, and thatched with reeds, or the wiry bent which grows so abundantly on the island. It was consecrated by Archbishop Theodore of Canter-

* More Scotorum, non de lapide, sed de robore secto. —Bede, iii. c. xxv.

bury, and dedicated to the Prince of the Apostles. This was the church attached to the monastery (no doubt of similar construction) of which St. Cuthbert was appointed Prior.

Chapter IX.

ST. CUTHBERT MADE PRIOR OF LINDISFARNE.

I MUST now mention the circumstances which led to the transfer of St. Cuthbert from Mailros to Lindisfarne. In the year 664, a conference, arranged by King Oswin, was held at Whitby, to settle the long-disputed controversy respecting the observance of the festival of Easter. St. Wilfrid was the spokesman on the side of the usage of the Roman Church, which was that of the rest of Christendom. Colman, the third Bishop of Lindisfarne in succession to St. Aidan, was the representative of the Scottish party.

We are indebted to Ven. Bede for an account of the discussion which took place at this conference. King Oswin opened the

proceedings by earnestly advocating uniformity of practice amongst those who together served God, and then called upon Bishop Colman to state what the rite was that he observed, and whence it derived its origin. Colman with quiet dignity alleged in defence of the Scottish custom—first, the example of St. John the Evangelist, who was said to have kept Easter on the fourteenth day of the lunar month; second, the Paschal Canons of Anatolius, who ordered it to be kept on the same day; third, the practice of St. Columba and his successors in the Isle of Iona, from whom he received it together with his mission as Bishop. Wilfrid, in answer, said that Colman was in error in respect to St. John, who, in deference to the prejudices of the Jews, kept the feast as they did, on the fourteenth day, whether it were a Sunday or not, whereas the Scots kept it only on that day when it happened to fall on a Sunday; neither could he appeal to the Paschal Canons of Anatolius, for Anatolius followed a cycle of nineteen years, which the Scots did not.

"As to your Father Columba and his disciples," he said, "I do not deny that they were servants of God and beloved by Him, and that they loved Him with rustic simplicity, but pious intentions. I do not think that such keeping of Easter was very prejudicial to them, so long as none came to show them how they might follow a more perfect rule. If a Catholic adviser had come among them, they would, doubtless, have followed his counsel, as they are known to have kept those commandments of God which they knew. But, as for you and your companions, you are, without doubt, in fault, if, after having heard the decrees of the Apostolic See, and of the universal Church, you refuse to follow them. Even admitting the sanctity of your Fathers, the authority of a small body, in an obscure isle in the Scottish sea, is surely not to be preferred to that of the universal Church throughout the world. Columba might have been a great man, but Peter was a greater, on whom our Lord built His Church, and to whom He gave the keys of the

kingdom of heaven." Wilfrid was carried away by the ardour and impetuousity of his character, and some of his statements were scarcely accurate. There was no decree of the universal Church or of the Apostolic See condemning the Celtic usage.

The observance of the Easter festival was simply a matter of discipline, not of doctrine; and, though the Roman Church had abandoned her original tradition, the successors of St. Peter, with wise and prudent moderation, had allowed its general acceptance to be the result of its own intrinsic merits, without enforcing it by any special decree. The reference to the authority of St. Peter, however, made a deep impression on the mind of Oswin.

"Is it true, Colman, that these words were spoken to Peter by our Lord?" "It is true, O King," was the answer. Then said the King—"Can you show any such power given to your Columba?" Colman answered, "None". Then added the King—"Do you both agree that these words were spoken to Peter, and that the keys of the kingdom of heaven were given to him by the Lord?"

They both answered "We do". Then the King gave his decision—"I also say unto you that he is the doorkeeper of heaven, whom I will not contradict; but as far as I know I am able, I desire in all things to obey his decrees, lest, when I come to the gates of heaven, there be none to open them, he being my adversary who is proved to have the keys". All present applauded the King's decision, and, renouncing the more imperfect institution, hastened to conform to that which was better.* But though the question was unanimously decided against Colman, he and several of his brethren were unwilling to lay aside the custom derived from their Fathers. He resigned his see, and returned to Iona, whence he originally came.

At the request of Bishop Colman, the Monastery of Lindisfarne was given by the King to the community at Mailros. Eata, who had been trained by St. Aidan, was

* Bede, *Eccles. Hist.* b. iii. c. xxv.; Lingard's *Anglo-Saxon Church*, v. i. c. i. p. 50; Archbp. Moran, *Irish Saints*, c. x. p. 257, &c.

made Abbot of both monasteries. Knowing the merit and tried virtue of Cuthbert, Eata sent him to preside as Prior over the Lindisfarne Monastery, "there to teach the rules of monastic perfection, both by his authority and the example of his virtues". St. Cuthbert, by order of the Abbot, composed a rule for the Anglo-Saxon monks, and to this new rule was shortly afterwards added the rule of St. Benedict.* In his new home, the life led by Cuthbert differed in nothing from that which for twelve years he had led at Mailros. During the first part of his rule, he met with some unpleasantness from several of his monks, who, with national obstinacy, still wished to adhere to the Scottish computation of Easter. These he overcame by the quiet power of his patience, never manifesting any resentment at the opposition which he encountered; but, with placid mind and unruffled countenance, bearing with the rude remarks uttered against him, he brought his opponents, by little and little, to a better disposition.

* Anonymous Monk.

So great was the fervour of our Saint, that he found the days too short for his devotion, and oftentimes spent whole nights in watching and prayer. Whilst the brethren slept, he would wander round the island to keep himself awake, reciting the praises of God. When he said Mass, such was the ardour of his faith in the divine mysteries, that he could hardly pronounce the words of the missal, on account of his sobs and tears.

The remembrance of the sacred passion of our Blessed Lord so deeply touched his heart, that in union with the great Victim of our salvation he would offer his life to God in reparation for the sins of men. When he assisted in his stall in the choir at High Mass, and the words "Sursum Corda" were chanted by the priest, so vehemently was his soul attracted towards heaven, that the response, "Habemus ad Dominum"—"We have them lifted to the Lord"—came from his lips rather in groans than in the natural tones of his voice.

His tenderness for the poor and for sinners,

a true characteristic of the Saints, was so great, that when his penitents were confessing to him he shed tears of compassion over them, and by taking upon himself the penance their sins merited, he brought them to a knowledge of their guilt, and led them to repentance by the persuasive force of his example. The fame of his saintly life, like a sweet perfume, spread itself beyond the bounds of his monastery. Persons of every condition of life came from far and near to cast themselves at his feet, and seek light and counsel in their trials and sorrows.

"No one," says Symeon, "went away from him without the joy of consolation—no one took back with him the grief of mind which he had brought into his presence." Cuthbert's labours were not confined to the island. Like St. Aidan, he travelled from house to house, over the moorlands and bleak hills of Northumberland, instructing the people and winning all hearts, as he had done in Scotland, by his charity and his gentle ways. He had one great advantage over his saintly predecessor, that he could converse with the

country people in their own language, which was his native tongue, and with the peculiarities of which he had become familiar amidst the marshes of Teviotdale; whereas St. Aidan, when he preached to the English, was obliged to avail himself of the services of the holy King Oswald, who acted as his interpreter.

Chapter X.

BEGINS A SOLITARY LIFE IN ST. CUTHBERT'S ISLAND.

SO another twelve years passed away peaceably and uneventfully, and Cuthbert had well-nigh reached his fortieth year. His heart was not fully at rest. Not content with the austerity and seclusion of a monastic life and the labours of a missionary, he was ever longing after still greater perfection, and more perfect solitude. Therefore in the year 676, with the blessing and permission of the Abbot Eata and the good wishes of his brethren, the man of God withdrew from the monastery and entered upon his life as an Anchorite.

In the first instance, he selected a spot not far removed from the monastery. This was the small island since known as St. Cuthbert's Island, for not only has a constant tradition handed down to us that this was the place chosen, but Bede expressly states that it was surrounded on all sides by the sea. The island is separated about a stone's throw from the shore, and at high water is entirely cut off from it by the waves. At the low tide it can be reached on foot, by cautiously stepping over the rocks, made slippery by a layer of sea-weed. In aftertimes there was a chapel, dedicated to St. Cuthbert, built upon a portion of the basaltic rock, which extends from the island to the elevated ridge which runs along to the southern front of the monastic ruins. The outline of this chapel can be traced, as the walls are still slightly raised above the foundations. Here, before the dissolution of the Priory, holy Mass was daily offered at an altar, adorned with statues of St. Cuthbert and St. Thomas of Canterbury.

FARNE.

Thus recluse
The man lived on in vision, still of God
Through contemplation known: and as the shades
Each other chase all day o'er steadfast hills,
Even so, athwart that Vision unremoved,
Forever rushed the tumults of this world,
Man's fleeting life, the rise and fall of states,
While changeless measured change; the spirit of prayer
Fanning that wondrous picture oft to flame,
Until the glory grew insufferable.
Long years thus lived he.

—Aubrey de Vere.

FARNE.

Chapter XI.

RETIRES TO FARNE.

CUTHBERT did not remain long in this retreat. Probably he found it was too near to the Priory and the mainland to allow of that entire solitude which his soul yearned after, for he had often said to his brethren "that, were it possible that I could hide myself in ever so narrow a cell, upon a cliff where the waves of the swelling ocean should gird me around on every side, and shut me out from the sight as well as the knowledge of all men, not even then should I think myself free from the snares of this deceitful world; but then also should I dread lest covetousness should tempt me to leave my retreat, or suggest some cause or other to lure me away!"

"Aiming, therefore, at higher things" and more perfect seclusion remote from the eyes of all, he sailed to the Island of Farne. This island, a conspicuous object in the sea view, is the largest of a picturesque group of islands, twenty-three in number, lying off the coast to the eastward, nearly opposite Bamborough, and surrounded on all sides by the deep and boundless ocean. It lies, "like the broken and defenceless hull of a shipwrecked vessel," exposed to the wild fury of the terrific storms which sweep along this dangerous coast. It is situated about seven miles distant from Holy Island, two from Bamborough, and two and a half from North Sunderland. It is about eleven acres in extent, of which, at the present time, five are in grass, the rest is solid rock.

This island had an evil reputation as the haunt of unclean spirits, and no human being had ever ventured to reside there, though it had been occasionally occupied by St Aidan, who retired there to pray. It had no convenience of any kind to fit it for a human habitation. It was without water, fruits, or

trees. By his prayers St. Cuthbert obtained a supply of water from the rock, and with his own hands, as we shall see later, raised a scanty crop of barley. At its southern extremity, a rugged block of basaltic rock rises to a height of 80 feet, and extending laterally to W. and E., hems in two sides of the island with a jagged and solid wall. On the other side, towards the ocean, a gentle slope falls to the water's edge, and there Cuthbert reared his humble dwelling-place.

Both Bede and Symeon have left us a minute description of the building, if building it can be called. It was nearly circular in shape, and measured from wall to wall about four or five perches. The wall itself, externally, was higher than the stature of a man; but internally it was much higher, the solid rock being scooped out by the Saint, so that he could see nothing but the blue sky above him, that thus "the whole bent of his mind might be turned to heavenly desires". The wall was constructed, not of hewn stones, nor of bricks, but of turf and unwrought stones, which were dug out of the foundations.

The roof was formed of rough beams and thatched with straw. Within the walls there were only two compartments — an oratory and a cell. At the landing-place, however, Cuthbert erected a larger house for the convenience of the brethren and strangers who might come to visit him, and close to it was a fountain of fresh water obtained by the prayers of the Saint. Having raised the buildings with the aid of his brethren, Cuthbert after a brief period began to dwell alone.

At first, when the monks from Lindisfarne came to visit him, his charity led him to go forth from his cell to minister to their wants. He would devoutly wash their feet with warm water, and he, in his turn, sometimes was forced by their importunity to take off his shoes and suffer them to wash his feet. After an interval, he ceased even to go out to meet his visitors, but shut himself up in his cell, merely conversing with those who came to him from his open window. In course of time he gave up even this practice, and never showed himself or opened his window except

on special occasions, to give his blessing or for some necessary act of charity.

In this manner Cuthbert lived for eight years, subsisting on the produce of a little field of barley, sown and reaped by his own hands—dividing his time, as did the solitaries in the deserts of Egypt, between manual labour, and prayer, and watchings, and fastings. "There thou, O sweetest Father," exclaims the pious historian of the Church of Durham, in a transport of enthusiastic admiration, "wast so much nearer to God as thou wert farther from the world and its clamorous anxieties; there thou, O most holy and revered, along with Mary, didst sit at the feet of the Lord, having chosen that better part, which shall be thine for ever; there thy thirsting soul desired access to God, the fountain of living waters, and fainted for the courts of the Lord's house; there thy flesh and thy heart rejoiced in the living God, and didst taste and see how sweet the Lord was, and thou wast blessed, because thy hope was in Him. With what earnestness, with how many sighs of love, with what

affection, with what repentance, and with how many tears didst thou wish, and ask, and entreat, and exclaim with the prophet: 'Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thine house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth' (Ps. xxv. 8). For setting aside all other desires, his whole life expressed only this prayer: 'One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life' (Ps. xxvi. 4). And so thou, blessed among the blessed, didst dwell in the house of the Lord, and there shalt praise Him for ever and ever."

But the more our Saint tried to fly from the conversation of men, and hide himself in the deepest solitude, the more did God manifest his sanctity, and proclaim his virtues before the eyes of the whole world. Not only from Northumbria, but from all parts of Great Britain, pilgrims came to see him, to confess their sins to him, and to seek light in their doubts, guidance in their difficulties, and comfort in their sorrows. Their confidence in the Saint was well repaid, "for no

one," says St. Bede, "departed from him without the joy of consolation, and the sorrow of mind which each man brought with him accompanied him no more in his departure". For Cuthbert knew how to refresh the mourner with pious exhortation; he knew how to remind those that were in tribulation of the joys of heavenly life, and to show that both the smiles and the frowns of this world are equally transient; and he was skilled in revealing to those that were tempted the manifold wiles of the old enemy. He showed how readily the soul that was void of brotherly or divine love might be taken prisoner, and how he that walked in the strength of divine faith might pass safely through the snares of the adversary, with the Lord's assistance, as through the threads of a spider's web. "How often," he said, "have they cast me headlong from the lofty rocks! How often have they hurled stones at me, as if to slay me! How often have they raised up fantastic temptations of one kind or another to frighten me, and attempted to drive me from this place of contest! Yet,

nevertheless, they have never been able to inflict any injury upon my body, nor touch my mind with fear."

Chapter XII.

COMPANIONSHIP WITH THE WILD BIRDS ON FARNE.

THE story of his life at Farne would not be complete if I did not tell of one tender and touching trait in the Saint's character—his familiar relations with the animal creation.

In the beginning, God gave to man dominion over all created things, "the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping thing that moveth upon the earth". But when man by sin rebelled against his Creator, then all creatures rebelled against him, and refused to serve him. The original relations between the highest of God's creatures upon the earth, and the lower creation, though forfeited by the children of Adam,

seem in some instances to have been restored, and more than one great Saint has exercised a marvellous power and influence over animals, and birds, and fishes.

We read how, in the amphitheatres of Rome, savage and untamed beasts have been suddenly arrested in their wild onslaught by the calm bearing and innocence of the early martyrs, and, laying aside their ferocity, have couched at the feet of those they were let loose to devour ; and I know of no narratives more beautiful and affecting than the accounts which his biographers have left of the wonderful ascendency which the seraphic St. Francis exercised over irrational creatures, and the loving intercourse between the Saint and them. These memories still live amongst the citizens of Perugia and Assisi, and the simple peasants of the Umbrian plains. Love had transformed the heart of Francis (these are the words of his latest biographer), even as amongst the Saints, that each word was as a word of love. He gave to the sun, the stars, to animals, the sweet name of brother and sister. He invites them all (as the great

prophet of old invited fire, hail, snow, and storms, and all animals, from the crawling reptile to the bird winging its way through the pure air), to praise the goodness of their common Master, and to testify their gratitude to Him; and they heard his voice, they understood his language, they felt his power, they paid homage to him, as they paid it to Adam, who had a divine commission to rule the world. Let us hear what St. Bonaventure says in recalling these wondrous facts.

When the servant of God, warned by St. Clare and Sylvester of the designs of heaven, set out on his way, he came to a place where a number of birds of all kinds were assembled. He ran towards them with joy, and saluted them as if they were reasonable beings. They all listened and turned towards him. When he got nearer, they bent their heads under the branches of the trees and fixed their eyes on him. Then he admonished them to listen to the Word of God with attention, and said to them, "My brothers the birds, you ought to praise your Creator, who has given you feathers for a covering,

wings to fly with, pure air for your dwelling place, and who feeds you without any solicitude on your own part". As he spoke, the birds testified their joy: they stretched forward their necks, they clapped their wings and opened their beaks, steadfastly looking at the servant of God. Francis, full of fervour, passed through them, brushing them often with his habit, yet not one of them was afraid. After he had given them his blessing, and signed them with the Cross, he gave them leave to go, and the whole flock flew away.

On another occasion, when a man presented the Saint with a hare, placing it on the ground at his feet, at the invitation of the loving father it jumped on to his breast. He pressed it to his heart with the tenderness of a mother, warning it not to let itself be caught again, and giving it leave to go, then gently placed it on the ground; but no sooner was it free than it jumped back into the tender arms, till at length Francis gave it to one of his brothers to carry into a quiet and sheltered place.

During a voyage on the lake of Rieti a

fisherman gave him a sea-bird which he had caught. Francis accepted it with pleasure, and holding it in his hand, invited it to fly away, but the bird would not move. Then Francis, raising his eyes to heaven, prayed long in a kind of ecstasy, and on coming to himself, as if from a dream, he ordered the bird to fly away and employ its voice in praising God. After this fresh order, and having received the blessing of the Saint, it fluttered its wings as a sign of joy, and flew away.

These charming legends will have paved the way for the equally touching stories of the loving intercourse between the gentle Anchorite of Farne and the wild birds that then, as now, frequented these solitary ocean islands. As soon as the crop of barley sown by Cuthbert appeared above the ground, the birds came in flocks to devour it. The Saint advanced towards them and thus addressed them: "Why do you touch the grain which you have not sown? Do you think that you have more need of it than I? If, nevertheless, you have obtained leave from God to do

this, do what He allows you; but if not, depart, and do no injury to the goods of another." At his words the birds at once flew away, and never afterwards molested his harvest.

On another occasion, noticing that two crows who had been accustomed to settle on the island tore with their beaks the straw and thatch from the roof of the hospitium, or guest-house, in order to build their nests, he checked them by a gentle movement of his hand, and then, in the name of Jesus Christ, bade them depart, and no longer presume to remain on the island. The birds at once obeyed his voice and mournfully flew away. After three days one of them returned, and approaching the venerable servant of God, with drooping wings and humble mien, and faint cries, and bowing its head, seemed to solicit forgiveness for its fault. The Saint, at once understanding its appeal, gave them leave again to return to the island, which the bird and its companion joyfully did, bringing in token of gratitude a suitable gift to the venerable

Father. For many subsequent years the birds remained on the island, and built their nests without even venturing to touch the Saint's property.

There were then, as there are now, vast numbers of sea-fowl who resorted to the islands to breed. Amongst these the eider ducks deserve particular notice from their intimate connection with the Saint. For centuries they have been known as St. Cuthbert's ducks.* He lavished upon them special marks of kindness and affection. They were frequently his sole companions during the long hours of his solitary nights, clustering round him when he watched and prayed on the rocks which surrounded his home. They obeyed his every word, and became so tame and familiar with him that they would allow him to approach them at all times without fear and caress them with his

* These beautiful birds breed nowhere but on the Farne Islands, and are still noted for their gentleness and tameness. Their down was called Cuthbert's down. In the list of articles belonging to the Feretory at Durham in 1417 are two pairs of cushions, of which one is of "Cuthbert's downe" (Eyre).

hand. He gave them full liberty to come and go and build their nests and rear their offspring—confining them, for this purpose, to certain localities of the island. They flew to him when in danger, and no one presumed to molest them whilst under his protection. As long as the Saint lived they abode within sight of his cell in peace and security and loving trust.

Chapter XIII.

VISITS THE ABBESS ELFLEDA AT COQUET ISLAND.

IN the year 684 (the last of his first residence on the Farne), his solitude was interrupted for a brief space by a memorable interview, which took place between him and the venerable and saintly Elfleda, the Abbess of St. Hilda's Monastery at Whitby. She was of royal descent on both sides of her pedigree, her father being Oswin, King of Bernicia, and her mother Eanfleda, daughter of Edwin, King of Deira. Some time before

the meeting with St. Cuthbert, she had experienced the efficiency of his miraculous power. As she herself informed Herefrid, priest of the Church at Lindisfarne, from whom Ven. Bede heard the story, she had almost entirely lost the use of her limbs, so as to be unable to walk, or stand upright, or move except on all-fours. In this distressing state she had recourse, mentally, to the name of the holy Anchorite Cuthbert, feeling convinced that, if she could but obtain something belonging to him, she would be healed. God made known her wish to the Saint, for, not long after, a messenger arrived at the monastery, with a linen girdle which Cuthbert had sent to her. Full of joy and confidence, she girt herself round with it, and next morning was restored to perfect health.

By her earnest entreaty, the man of God consented to meet her. The place fixed upon for this meeting was the Island of Coquet, opposite the mouth of the river of that name, about a mile from Amble, where there is now a Catholic mission, and about twenty miles south of Farne. Upon the

island is still to be seen a fragment of the monastic ruin. Cuthbert, accompanied by some of the brethren from Lindisfarne, sailed from Farne, and met Elfleda at the large monastery which then existed on the island. After having conversed together for a short time, Cuthbert answering the many questions put to him, the royal Abbess made known to him the real motive which had induced her to seek for this interview. Suddenly she fell upon her knees before the servant of God, and adjured him, by the "venerable name of the heavenly King and His angels," to tell her how long King Egfrid, her brother, should live and reign over the kingdom of the Angles? It was not through idle curiosity that she asked this question. A great crisis in the state seemed to be near at hand. The long struggle between the kings of Bernicia and Mercia had weakened the Northumbrian kingdom, and now the savage Picts were invading it from the north. Egfrid's ambitious and restless character was well known to her, and she was anxious to learn from Cuthbert what was to be the termination of

the war in which he was now embarked, and the fate of the brother whom he loved so well. "I know," she said, "that, from the spirit of prophecy which you possess so abundantly, you can do this, if you wish." Cuthbert at first tried to evade her question, but the Abbess pressed him, with tears, to tell her the truth. Thus entreated, the Saint revealed to her that her royal brother would not outlive the year. "Who, then," she exclaimed, "will succeed him, as he has neither children nor brother?" Cuthbert remained silent for a short time, and then replied: "Say not that he is without children, for he shall have a successor, whom you may embrace with sisterly affection". "But," continued Elfleda, "tell me, I beseech you, where is he now?" "You see," rejoined Cuthbert, "this wide and mighty ocean, with how many islands it abounds. It is easy for God, from one of these, to provide a ruler for the kingdom of the Angles."

Then Elfleda understood that he spoke of Aldfrid, who was said to be the son of Egfrid's father, and who at that time was

living in exile in the Island of Iona. Before the termination of their interview, Elfleda, knowing that her royal brother intended to make Cuthbert a Bishop, urged him strongly to accept the office. Remembering the prediction made to him on his death-bed by Boisil at Mailros, Cuthbert made answer: "I know that I am not worthy of so high a station; nevertheless, I cannot escape the decrees of God. If it is His will that I should be subjected to such a burthen, I believe that He will restore me to freedom shortly after; and perhaps, after not more than two years, send me back to the rest of my beloved solitude. But I command you, in the name of our Lord and Saviour, that you tell this to no one till after my death." After this they parted, and Cuthbert returned to Farne.

EPISCOPATE.

As the Apostle Paul,
Though raised in raptures to the heaven of heavens,
Not therefore loved his brethren less, but longed
To give his life—his all—for Israel's sake,
So Cuthbert, loving God, loved man the more—
His wont of old.

—Aubrey de Vere.

EPISCOPATE.

Chapter XIV.

ELECTED BISHOP.

THE prophetic words of Boisil and of our Saint were soon fulfilled, and that life of an Anchorite, so calm and so sweet to the heart of Cuthbert, was now, for a time at least, to come to an end. Whilst the Saint had been living for God alone in solitude and prayer on his solitary rock in the midst of the ocean, great events had occurred in the Church of Northumbria.

St. Wilfrid, who had been appointed the spiritual ruler over the whole northern province, had for many years administered his vast diocese with consummate prudence, energy, and zeal. At length, in the year 678, a dispute arose between him and King Egfrid, who had hitherto been his

staunch friend and protector. In consequnce of this, Wilfrid was driven from his Bishopric, and, misled by the representations of the King, Archbishop Theodore was prevailed upon to divide his great diocese, and to consecrate two other Bishops at York, to preside over the two new sees thus formed. Bosa was appointed to the province of Deira, and fixed his Episcopal residence at York; and Eata, the Abbot of Lindisfarne, was made Bishop of Hexham and Lindisfarne.

Some time after, Theodore consecrated Tunbert to the Church of Hexham, and Eata was confined to the See of Lindisfarne. Four years later, for some act of disobedience, Tunbert was deprived of his see; and a synod of Bishops, under the presidency of Theodore, and at which King Egfrid was present, was held at Twiford (at the two fords), in order to choose a successor to the Hexham Bishopric. There has been much discussion as to the site of this place, but most probably it was situated at Alnmouth, a small watering-place at the mouth of the

Alne, about three miles distant from the ancient town of Alnwick. At this synod Cuthbert was unanimously chosen Bishop, and thus came to pass that event which he had so long feared, and which the saintly Boisil had foretold, in sacred confidence, to his beloved disciple more than forty years before.

When the tidings of his election reached the venerable hermit, he resolutely refused to leave his cell. Letters and messengers were sent to him in vain, until at last the King himself and Bishop Trumwin, who had been appointed Bishop of the Picts, and many noblemen and religious, together with a deputation of the monks of Lindisfarne, sailed over to the Farne, and on bended knees besought him, by our Lord, and with tears, to yield to their entreaties; nor did they desist until they forced him to quit his beloved seclusion, and dragged him before the synod. Overcome by their importunity, and calling to mind the prophecy so often referred to, and fearing to resist the will of Divine Providence, Cuthbert was at length

compelled to give way, and, shedding torrents of tears, bowed his neck to the yoke imposed upon him—a most touching scene, worthy of the pencil of some great artist! As the winter was approaching, his consecration was deferred, and Cuthbert was able once more, for a season, to return to his solitary ways and life.

Chapter XV.

HIS CONSECRATION AT YORK.

ON the following Easter, which in that year (A.D. 685) fell on the 26th of March, the ceremony of his consecration was performed at York, with much solemnity, by the Primate Theodore, in the presence of the King and an immense concourse of Priests, and with seven Bishops surrounding and assisting the Archbishop. Two months later, on the 20th of May, Egfrid was slain in battle against the Picts, and Aldfrid, his bastard brother, was raised to the throne in his stead.

After his consecration, Cuthbert returned

for a short time to the Farne to prepare himself in solitude and prayer for the work of his Episcopacy. Thence he proceeded to Mailros, where Eata, now Bishop of Lindisfarne, was then staying. In that sacred spot, where they had spent so many happy years together, these two holy Bishops mutually agreed to make an exchange of their Episcopal sees. Eata chose Hexham, and Cuthbert was translated to the charge of his beloved Lindisfarne.

King Egfrid, before his death, bestowed upon the Saint, on the day of his consecration at York, a large tract of land within the walls of the city, also the villa of Craik, with a circuit of three miles around it, where he founded a monastery, which afterwards gave shelter to his body, when its bearers were flying from the Danes. In addition, the ancient Roman city of Lugubalia (now Carlisle) and the county adjoining was made over to him. There he established a monastery of Nuns, and a school in which clerics were trained for the service of the Church.

Chapter XVI.

HIS LIFE AS BISHOP—LABOURS AND MIRACLES.

THE Episcopal dignity made but little change in the life of the blessed Cuthbert. He still wore his monk's garb, and taught the people committed to his charge as of old, more by the eloquence of his saintly life than his words. He devoted much time to prayer, earnestly supplicating grace for his flock; and in the midst of his daily toils faithfully observed the regular hours and severe austerities of the monastic life.

He travelled mostly on foot through his vast diocese, which extended from the Tees to the Firth of Forth, penetrating into the defiles of the hills of Northumberland, and the dense forests which then covered the valleys, in order to preach to and instruct his people. "His whole episcopate," says the eloquent historian of the monks of the West, "seems to bear the character of a mission indefinitely prolonged."

In him the friendless and oppressed serfs found a protector against the brutal violence of the lords. The poor and feeble, and those afflicted with sorrow or sickness came to him as of yore, and from their gentle and loving Bishop received consolation and aid. To the hungry he gave food, for those who were wretchedly clad and without protection from the bitter winter cold of those northern regions he provided clothes and warm covering. In a word, he assiduously practised all the virtues of a true pastor of souls. "In all things conforming," says the Anonymous Monk, "to the doctrine of St. Paul to Timothy: 'It behoveth a Bishop to be blameless as the steward of God'."

Nor were miracles wanting to add lustre to his sanctity. The venerable historian of his life has recorded many of those graces granted to the prayers of this great servant of God. They were obtained for the most part for the benefit of his people who were suffering from sickness or calamity; and this is a feature which gives to them such an attractive beauty, because they set before us in a

strong light the intense and active sympathy for human sorrow which was so deeply impressed in the heart of St. Cuthbert. It is the fashion for modern criticism to scoff at these miraculous gifts, and throw ridicule upon those who credit them. But why should God's arm be shortened, and why should He not do for His faithful servants, and as a reward of the simple faith of His children, what He did of old for His chosen people in the desert, or for the sick, and the lame, and the blind, on the shores of Genesareth, or in the streets of Jerusalem? But not solely because they testify to the heroic sanctity of our Patron and Father, but because they contain many curious details which throw light upon his episcopal life, and upon the customs and manners of the times in which he lived, and bring out in strong relief the simple but intense faith of the English of that day, some account of these will prove of interest to my readers.

As he was returning from his visit to Eata at Mailros, mentioned in a former chapter, an earl attached to the Court of King

Egfrid earnestly besought him to turn aside from his journey to give his blessing to his village and his household. On his arrival, the nobleman informed him of the severe illness of one of his retainers, thanking God that the holy father had been permitted to enter into his house. Cuthbert blessed some water, and sent it to the sick man by one of the earl's dependants, who afterwards became a Priest of the Church of Lindisfarne, and was an eye-witness of the miracle. No sooner had the sick man received some drops of the blessed water into his mouth than he fell into a profound sleep, and on wakening the next morning was restored to perfect health.

One of his constant occupations as Bishop was to administer the holy Sacrament of Confirmation. For this purpose he travelled from village to village, instructing the rustic inhabitants, penetrating into the most wild and mountainous districts; and oftentimes the people would assemble to meet him in some open space, situated in the midst, and at equal distances from the small hamlets,

which were widely scattered through the surrounding country. Here the people would encamp for whole days and nights around their Bishop, in huts built of the boughs of trees, cut from the neighbouring forests. Once, whilst preaching for two whole days to the crowd which flocked to him at one of these gatherings, and administering confirmation ("anointing their forehead with the holy chrism") to those whom he had recently baptised, a number of women appeared, bearing upon a litter a young man, wasted with a long and grievous sickness. Setting down their burthen at the outskirts of the forest in which the holy Bishop was standing, they sent to ask permission to bring the sick man to receive the episcopal blessing. When the youth had been brought into his presence, Cuthbert ordered all to withdraw to some distance, and casting himself on his knees beside the bier, he most earnestly prayed to God for his recovery. Then rising, he made over him the sign of the cross, and immediately the malady, which had defied the skill of many physicians, was

driven away, and the young man rose from his couch, and, after giving thanks to God, returned home rejoicing and in sound health.

The following narrative will give us an insight into the manner in which visitors were received at the houses of the wealthy. On one of his numerous confirmation tours Cuthbert arrived at the house of an earl, whose wife was lying dangerously ill. The nobleman came out to meet his saintly guest, and on his knees performed the usual hospitable rite of washing the hands and feet of his visitor. When they were seated at table the earl made known to the Bishop the illness of his wife, and, full of faith in the efficacy of the Saint's prayers, begged him to bless some water with which to sprinkle her "For I believe," said he, "that presently, by the gift of God she will be restored to health; or, if she die, that she will pass from death to everlasting life, and by dying receive more speedily the recompense of her long and painful illness." Cuthbert, moved with compassion, did as he was requested, and sent water, which he

blessed, by the hands of one of his Priests, commanding him to sprinkle the sick woman with it. On entering the bed-chamber, in which she lay like one half dead, the Priest sprinkled her and the bed, and poured some drops of water into her mouth. As soon as the blessed water touched the sick woman, who was quite insensible, she was completely restored to health, both of mind and body, and, rising from her bed, came forth and waited upon the holy Bishop.

The account of the following miracle was given to Bede by the holy Priest Ethelwald, who accompanied the servant of God in his journeys, and was an eye-witness of the event which he described. This Ethelwald was afterwards made Abbot of Mailros, and, in 724, Bishop of Lindisfarne. He told that, as St. Cuthbert was, as usual, traversing his diocese, preaching and giving confirmation, he came to a certain town called Bedesfield, in which there was a small community of religious women, who, through fear of a barbarian army—probably of the Picts, by whom the King of Northumbria had been so recently

slain in battle—had fled from the monastery which Cuthbert had a short time before given to them as a residence. One of these virgins, who was a kinswoman of Ethelwald, had for a whole year suffered excruciating pains in her head and side, which no medicine could relieve. Cuthbert, taking pity on her, anointed her with the holy oil, and immediately she recovered, and in a few days was restored to perfect health.

Not long after this a striking miracle was performed by the Saint in favour of an officer of the name of Hildmær, who had been attached to the Court of the King and was a most fervent Catholic, and with his whole household was so earnest in the practice of all good works, that our Saint conceived a great affection for him, and whenever his duties took him into the neighbourhood was accustomed to visit at his house. This officer came to Cuthbert in great haste, on horseback, and entreated him at once to send a Priest to administer the sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord to his wife, who was at the point of death. The truth was that the

poor, devout woman was permitted by God, for her greater merit, to be possessed by an evil spirit; but the husband was ashamed to make this known to the holy Bishop, who esteemed her so much on account of her piety. Whilst the Saint was considering what priest he should send with the officer, he suddenly learnt in spirit what was the real nature of his wife's malady, and he said to the officer: "I must send no one, but I will go myself with you to visit her". As they rode together the husband wept, and, seeing the tears chasing each other down the manly cheeks of the rough soldier, Cuthbert's tender heart was deeply moved, and, addressing him in words of gentle tenderness, consoling and encouraging him, he told him that such assaults of the evil one were not always a punishment for crime, but a trial which God permitted to fall upon the innocent. "I know," he added, "that before our arrival at the house the demon will be put to flight, and that your wife herself will come out to meet us and will help me to dismount from my horse, taking these reins into her hand."

These words proved to be true, for as they neared the house the wicked spirit suddenly departed, "not daring to await the coming of the Holy Ghost, with whom the man of God was full". The noble lady, freed from the chains which had bound her, rose as from a dead sleep, and stood on the threshold to meet them, seizing the bridle of the horse on which the Saint was seated, and testifying to her complete recovery of both mind and body.

A contagious disease at another time broke out in his diocese, and Cuthbert at once hastened to the spot. After visiting and bringing the consolations of religion to those who had been assailed by the epidemic, he asked the Priest who accompanied him if there was still anyone sick amongst the poor afflicted people whom he could bless before departing. "Then," says the Priest, to whom we are indebted for this story, "I showed him in the distance a poor woman bathed in tears, one of whose sons was already dead, and who held another in her arms, just about to render its last breath. The Bishop ran to

her, and taking the dying child from its mother's arms, kissed it first and then blessed it, and restored it to the mother, saying to her, as our Blessed Lord said to the widow of Nain: "Woman, weep not; have no more fear or sorrow, your son is saved".* Can there be wonder that such deeds as these gave rise in the hearts of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors to that deep affection and veneration for our venerable Father Cuthbert beyond any other English Saint.

Chapter XVII.

DEATH OF KING EGFRID.

WE must now return to King Egfrid and his untimely fate. Though noted for his piety and zeal for religion, he was fond of conquest, and engaged in many wars. In the May of 685, much against the advice of St. Cuthbert, to whom he was greatly attached, he led an army into Scotland, and began to

* Bolland, p. 124; *Vita*, c. xxxiii.

ravage, with great violence and cruelty, the kingdom of the Picts.

The Picts formed one of the two indigenous races who occupied what is now known as Scotland. One of these races —the Cumbrians, or "Britons"—inhabited the country south of the Firths of Forth and Clyde; the other — the Picts—originally inhabited the whole country north of these estuaries, as well as Galloway and a considerable part of Ireland. Both belonged to the Celtic race. From the time when they first became known to the Romans, the Picts were divided into two branches—the Northern and the Southern. The Southern Picts adopted Christianity at a much earlier period than the Northern Picts,* having been converted to the faith by the preaching of St. Ninian,† the Apostle of the Kingdom of Strathclyde.

Egfrid crossed the Firth, and penetrating beyond the Tay, destroyed two forts. But the native forces, by feigned retreats, succeeded in luring the invaders into a defile at

* Skerne, B. iii. p. 16. † Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 4.

Dunnichen, near Forfar, where the King was surrounded and slain, with nearly all his army. Cuthbert, knowing by divine inspiration that the time of Egfrid's death was near at hand, as he had foretold a year before to the King's sister, the Abbess Elfleda, set out for the sunny city of Carlisle to meet the Queen Ermenburga, who had gone there to the monastery of her sister to await the issue of the campaign.

The Provost of Carlisle, named Waga, accompanied by some of the leading citizens, came to do the honours of the ancient city, and accompanied the Bishop round the walls, and pointed out to him the remains of Roman antiquities, with which the place abounded. On arriving at a fountain of marvellous workmanship, of which, it is said, traces are still discernible, the saintly Bishop suddenly became distracted in spirit, and, leaning on his staff, bent his face to the ground. Then raising his eyes to heaven, and sighing deeply, he whispered in a low voice, softly, "Perhaps at this very moment the hazard of the battle is over!" A Priest who was standing at his side, and overheard

the words, asked him the meaning of this exclamation. St. Cuthbert, wishing to conceal the vision which he had seen, replied: "Do you not see how wonderfully changed and disturbed the air is, and who amongst mortals is sufficient to search out the judgments of God?" However, he at once went to the Queen, and said to her, "See that you mount your horse early at dawn on Monday next, and go with as much haste as possible to the Royal City (the strongly fortified Castle of Bamborough), lest, haply, the King should be slain. But as I am engaged to dedicate the church of a neighbouring monastery, I will follow you immediately after the ceremony." On the next day, which was Sunday, after consecrating the new church, he preached to the brethren of the monastery. Towards the end of his discourse, he solemnly addressed them in these words—"I beseech you, most beloved brethren, according to the warning of the Apostle, 'Watch, stand fast in the faith, girt you like men, and be strong, lest, haply, some temptation come and find you unprepared'. Wherefore, be ever mindful of that

precept of the Lord, 'Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation'."

His surprised audience thought that he alluded to the return of the pestilence, which had carried off some of their number, and which, in the years 681 and 682, had devastated the whole of England and Ireland. But on the next day a soldier, who had escaped from the battle, arrived in Carlisle, and, by the sad announcement which he brought, explained the hidden meaning of the man of God's discourse.

On that very day, the 20th of May, and at the same hour in which it was revealed to Cuthbert, as he was standing in ecstasy at the fountain, King Egfrid had been slain, and his army cut to pieces by his side. Fortunately for the Anglic kingdom, "the hope and force of which," writes Bede, "began to retreat like an ebbing tide," Aldfrid, who was famed for his wisdom and valour, was summoned home and invested with the royal dignity. His reign proved a blessing to the whole kingdom, and obtained for him the title of Aldfrid the Wise.

The shock of the fatal termination of Egfrid's expedition, and the death of the King, induced his Queen, Ermenburga, to retire into the monastery over which her sister presided at Carlisle. St. Cuthbert once more journeyed to that city, to give her the religious habit, and for the purpose of ordaining some Priests, at the request of the brethren of his own monastery. During this visit, which took place probably in the latter part of the year 686, not long before his death, and which was the last he paid to this city, a memorable and touching interview took place between the venerable Bishop and St. Herbert, the hermit of Derwentwater.

Chapter XVIII.

ST. CUTHBERT AND ST. HERBERT.

HERBERT, who is known to us only through his connexion with St. Cuthbert, led a solitary life, in a cell on an island at the north-eastern end of the beautiful lake

of Derwentwater, which carries away the palm from all the lakes of Cumberland. There is no record come down to us of how he became acquainted with St. Cuthbert, but it is possible he may, in earlier life, have been nnder the spiritual jurisdiction of the Saint at Mailros or Lindisfarne. At all events, it was by the advice of Cuthbert that he had chosen an eremitical life. The two Saints were united in the bonds of a most intimate spiritual friendship, and it had been their custom to meet together at least once a year. Hearing that Cuthbert was at Carlisle, Herbert came from his island home to converse with him, "in the hope of being more and more inflamed by heavenly desires by his wholesome exhortations". Whilst they were mutually inebriating each other with draughts of heavenly life, Cuthbert said to his friend: "Bethink you, brother Herbert, of anything you may have need to ask me, and speak to me about it, for after we shall have departed the one from the other, we shall never more meet again in this world, nor see each other with the eyes of the flesh.

For I am assured that the time of my dissolution is not far off, and the laying aside of this tabernacle is at hand."

On hearing these words Herbert fell at the feet of Cuthbert, and, shedding abundant tears, said to him: "I beseech you, by the Lord, do not leave me, but bear in mind me, your friend and companion, and beg of the mercy of God that, as we have served Him on earth, so we may pass together to behold His brightness in heaven; for you know how I have always endeavoured to live by the command of your mouth, and that in whatsoever thing I have offended through ignorance or frailty, that I have striven to correct, at the good pleasure of your will".

The holy Bishop bowed his head in prayer, and being taught by the Holy Spirit that his prayer was heard, "Rise, my brother," he said, "and weep not, but rejoice greatly, for the divine mercy has granted what we asked Him". They parted, Cuthbert to return to his episcopal see, which he not long after resigned, and Herbert to his solitary cell on Derwentwater.

The subsequent events confirmed both the promises and the truth of the prediction. After their parting they never saw each other with the eyes of the body, but on the same day, and at one and the same moment (Wednesday, the 20th of March, 687), departing this life, Cuthbert on his bleak rock in the midst of the German Ocean, Herbert in his cell on his grassy island, reposing on the unruffled waters of the peaceful and beautiful Cumberland lake, their souls were united together in the beatific vision, and were translated, by the ministry of angels, to the throne of the Eternal King.

Herbert, however, as Bede relates, was prepared by a long illness, and perhaps by the dispensation of our Lord's mercy, that the refining pain of suffering might supply whatever deficiency of merit he might have in comparison with the blessed Cuthbert, so that, being equalled in grace to his saintly friend and intercessor, they might, as they had at one and the same day departed from the body, be thought worthy to be admitted

together to the one and the like seat of everlasting bliss.*

And now our Saint, knowing by divine revelation of his approaching death, resolved in his mind to lay down the cares of his pastoral office, and to return once more to his hermit's life, in order, without solicitude, to prepare by prayer and heavenly contemplation and psalmody for his departure. Before putting this resolve into execution, he desired first to make a complete visitation, not only of his diocese, but of all the religious houses which he had founded, to confirm and strengthen their devout inmates by his last words of counsel and exhortation. Whilst he was thus engaged, at her pressing invitation, he paid a second visit to the royal virgin Elfleda at Whitby, where she governed as Abbess the convent founded by St. Hilda.

* Seven centuries later, A.D. 1374, Thomas de Appleby, Bishop of Carlisle, ordered a Mass to be sung on St. Herbert's Isle by the Vicar of Crosthwaite, the parish in which the lake lies, on the anniversary of his death ; and granted an Indulgence of forty days to all who, on that day, visited the Island, in honour of St. Cuthbert and St. Herbert.

[No English Saint had more frequent or more affectionate intercourse than Cuthbert with the heads of the great monasteries of holy women which were then so numerous in the north of England, and especially with those royal princesses who ruled over the large communities, some of which were double monasteries, at Coldingham, Whitby, Tynemouth, and Carlisle. This fact is sufficient evidence to confute the assertions made by modern writers that St. Cuthbert had a great antipathy to the "devout female sex".]

One object of his visit to Whitby was to consecrate a church for the use of the community, which had increased to a considerable number. As he was seated at the table with the Abbess, Cuthbert became wrapt in contemplation. His limbs were convulsed, he changed colour, his eyes became fixed, and the knife which he held in his hand dropped upon the table. A Priest who was assisting the Bishop leaned towards Elfleda, and whispered to her, "Ask the Bishop what he has just now seen, for I know that he sees something hidden, which the rest of

us cannot see". On her questioning the Saint, Cuthbert answered, playfully: "Do you think I can eat the whole day? Surely I ought to rest a little!" But she was not to be turned aside by this evasion of her question, but urgently besought him to reveal the vision. "I have seen," he replied, "the soul of a certain holy person in this monastery borne up by the hands of angels to heaven, and to-morrow, when I am celebrating Mass, you yourself shall tell me his name."

On hearing this, the Abbess at once sent to the monastery to inquire who had lately departed this life; but the messenger, finding all safe and well, set out next morning to return to his mistress. On the road, he met some persons carrying in a cart the body of one of the shepherds, who had been noted for his saintly life, and who had met his death by falling from a tree which he had incautiously climbed, at the moment when the Saint had seen his soul borne up to heaven. The Abbess, on being told of this, immediately hurried to the church, and, with

womanly impetuosity, cried out to the Bishop, "I pray you, my Lord Bishop, remember during Mass the soul of my servant Haduald, who was killed yesterday by falling from a tree".*

Thomas of Ely, the author of the life of St. Ethelreda, the noble Queen of Northumbria, "regia virgo," the royal Saint and virgin, as he calls her, tells us that she had a great friendship for St. Cuthbert, though this fact is not mentioned by Bede. She not only gave great gifts to the Monastery of Lindisfarne, but embroidered for him with her own hands a stole and maniple covered with gold and precious stones, that, wearing it at the altar, he might always remember her at the holy sacrifice.†

* This miracle is the subject of a fresco discovered some years ago in the Church at Pittington, near Durham.

† This writer of the 12th century affirms that the stole and maniple embroidered by Ethelreda for St. Cuthbert, were venerated till his time at Durham.—Montal, *Hist. of the Monks of the West.*

Chapter XIX.

VISITS THE ABBESS VERCA AT TYNEMOUTH.

HIS last visit of all was to another Abbess of high birth: this was Verca, the Abbess of the monastery at Tynemouth.

I have already pointed out the difficulty which exists as to the locality to which Bede refers when he speaks of the river Tine; but however opinions may differ as to the monastery mentioned in chap. i., p. 10, it seems probable, if not certain, that the visit of St. Cuthbert, which took place shortly before his death, was to the Nunnery at Tynemouth over which Verca ruled as Abbess. A chapel of wood was built here by King Edwin, in which his daughter took the veil. This chapel was afterwards rebuilt with stone by Oswald, in the eighth century, and dedicated to St. Mary; and having been repeatedly plundered by the Danes, was refounded by Sostig, Earl of Northumberland. In 1074, it was annexed to the Monastery of Jarrow, and both of

these were made cells to the Abbey of Durham. It would appear from this that the Nunnery at Tynemouth had been converted into a monastery of men. In 1090, a priory of Black Canons was established here by Earl Mowbray, who turned it into a fortress during his conspiracy against William Rufus, when it was again nearly demolished, but rebuilt in 1110. It was occasionally the residence of the Queens of Edward I. and II., and was afterwards plundered by the Scots.

St. Cuthbert was received with great veneration by the Abbess and her sisters. After the hour of the noonday rest, which was usually observed by all religious communities, Cuthbert, feeling thirsty, asked them to bring him a glass of water to drink. He made the sign of the cross over it, as was his custom, and having drunk a small quantity, handed back the glass to the Priest who had brought it to him.

This was the Priest attached to the monastery, and on receiving the cup he raised it to his lips, and, to his astonishment, the water

seemed to have acquired the flavour of wine. This miracle was related to Ven. Bede by one of the Priests of the Church, who afterwards lived and died in the Monastery of Jarrow, of which Bede was a monk.

On taking leave of Verca, she presented a linen winding sheet to Cuthbert, which he ever afterwards retained, and in which his Body was enveloped after death.

Chapter XX.

RETURNS TO FARNE.

TWO years, counting from the date of his election, had now been spent by him as Bishop. Warned of his approaching end, he returned to Lindisfarne, and there spent the festival of Christmas in the midst of his brethren. Immediately afterwards he withdrew to his hermitage in the Island of Farne, exulting in the repose he had gained, and bent upon preparing for his last passage. His faithful monks gathered round him as he was about to embark, and one of their

number, who, on account of his venerable age and long-tried virtue, was privileged to speak, asked him to tell them when they might hope for his return. He replied, "When you shall bring my body hither". The sorrowing community then accompanied him in tears to the sea-shore.

It must have been a touching scene, this last parting between the saintly Bishop and his spiritual children. Archbishop Eyre likens it to the last interview between the patriarch Jacob and his sons, but does it not recall to our minds with greater force, another parting—more affecting still, that last farewell between the Apostle of the Gentiles and the clergy of Ephesus, on the shores of the Ægean, every detail of which was re-enacted? "Kneeling down, he prayed with them all, and there was much weeping among them all; and falling on the neck of Paul, they kissed him. Being grieved most of all for the word which he had said, that they should see his face no more. And they brought him on his way to the ships." (Acts xx. 36 and *seq.*)

During the two months Cuthbert survived,

he relaxed somewhat the strictness of his solitude, and was accustomed to leave his cell and converse more frequently with the monks who came to visit him. These visits were very grateful to him, and he poured out upon his brethren all the tenderness of his paternal heart. Not only did he, "like the patriarch of the desert," exhort them in moving words to fidelity and perseverance in their holy state, and instruct them in the intricate ways of Christian perfection, but with thoughtful kindness provided for their corporal necessities.

One day several monks having come to see him, Cuthbert went out to them, and having "refreshed them with spiritual refection," he concluded by telling them before setting out on their homeward voyage, to cook and eat a goose which he had provided for their refreshment. Then giving them his blessing, he retired into his cell. The monks, among whom was a venerable Priest, named Cynemund, noted for his saintly life, and who was Bede's informant, having brought a supply of food with them,

neglected to make use of the Saint's gift. Their disobedience was punished; for, as they were preparing to go on board their boat, on a sudden a wild tempest arose, which prevented their putting to sea, and for seven whole days confined them prisoners on the Island. On the seventh day, the servant of God, taking compassion upon them, went out to the Hospitium to console them by his presence. On entering the house, he perceived the goose hanging on the wall, and in a half joking tone, reproved them for not doing as he had wished them. "What marvel is it that the sea does not suffer you to depart? Put the goose at once into the chaldron, cook it and eat it, that the sea may be at rest, and you may return home." As soon as they had done what he bade them, the storm was lulled, and a perfect calm ensued, so that they were able to embark and return to their monastery, filled with shame for their disobedience, and yet rejoicing at the wonderful power which God had given to His servant, and His merciful chastisement of their fault.

Two months were thus passed in the quiet enjoyment of his well earned repose, during which he redoubled his prayers and austerities, looking for the end.

Towards the end of February, he was seized with a sudden illness, and this was the immediate forerunner of his death. Worn out with unceasing labour during the toilsome years of his missionary life, as Prior and Bishop, enfeebled by vigil and fast, and exposure to the wild storms which swept over his ocean home, his constitution still suffering from the effects of the severe attack of the great sickness which prostrated him at Mailros in the early years of his religious profession, the Christian warrior sank to rest upon the battlefield, where he had fought and conquered the enemy of souls. During three weeks of continual suffering, the last remains of strength were completely exhausted. Fortunately we have a minute account of his last illness, related to Ven. Bede by an eye-witness—the Priest Herefrid, who then presided over the Monastery of Lindisfarne as Abbot.

LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

So, gentle one,
Heaven set thee free ; for ere thy years were full
Thy work was done.

—Cardinal Newman.

LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

Chapter XXI.

LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH, AS RELATED BY THE PRIOR HEREFRID.

I CANNOT omit one word of this most interesting narrative, for these descriptions of the deathbeds of the Saints of old, told in the artless words of some venerable monk, are, to my mind, amongst the most touching records of the past. The simplicity and pathos of the language, the minuteness of detail, the reverence and undoubting faith, and deeply religious tone, which breathe through every line, transport us at once out of this everyday life into the midst of the unseen world and to the very threshold of the house of God.

"After three weeks' continued wasting and infirmity, Cuthbert came to his end thus:

He began to be taken ill on the fourth day of the week (Wednesday, the 27th of February, 687), and in like manner on the fourth day of the week, his sickness having been accomplished, he departed to the Lord.

"And when I came on the first morning after he was taken ill (for I had gone to the island with the brethren three days before), through a desire to receive from him the comfort of his wonted benediction and exhortation, and having intimated by the usual signal that I had arrived, he came to the window, and only returned a sigh in answer to my greeting, whereupon I said, 'What is the matter, my Lord Bishop? Have you been seized with illness during the night?' And he said, 'Yes, sickness has stricken me this night'. Now I was thinking of his old infirmity, namely, an almost daily trouble, wherewith he was wasted, and I did not suppose that he spoke of a new and unusual attack, and without asking any more questions—'Give us,' I said, 'your blessing, for it is time for us to go on board, and to return home'.

"'Do as you say,' he said; 'go on board

and return home safe, and when God shall have taken my soul, bury me in this cell, on the east side of my oratory, opposite the Holy Cross which I have erected there. There is at the north of the same oratory a (stone) coffin, hidden by sods, which formerly the venerable Abbot Cudda presented to me. Place my body in that, and wrap it in the fine linen which you will find there. I would not indeed be clothed in it while living, but for the love of the God-beloved woman who sent it to me, the Abbess Verca, I have taken care to preserve it to wrap my body.' Hearing this, 'I beseech you, Father,' I said, 'since you are sick and about to die, permit some of the brethren to remain and minister to you'. But he said, 'Go now, and return at a suitable time'. And though I pressed him more earnestly to accept our service, I was unable to obtain my request. At last I asked when we might return, and he said: 'When God shall please, and He shall show you'. We accordingly departed as he had commanded, and having called together

all the monks in the Church, I ordered prayers to be made without intermission for him, saying that it seemed to me, from his words, that the day was drawing near on which he was to depart to God.

"Now, on account of his illness, I was very anxious to go back to him, but for five days a tempest opposed my wishes, so that we could not return; and the issue of the event showed that what happened was done by God.

"For as Almighty God would chastise His servant, in order thoroughly to cleanse him from all stain of worldly frailty, and to show his adversaries that nothing could prevail against the fortitude of his faith, He was pleased to separate him for so long a time from man; and to prove and refine him by the pain of the flesh, and a sharper struggle with the old enemy

"But when the calmer weather had returned, we went back to the island, when we found that he had gone out of his monastery (cell), and that he was sitting in the house in which we were accustomed to reside. And as a certain urgent matter constrained the other monks who accompanied me to sail back to the

opposite shore, I myself resolved to remain on the island, and to minister to our Father's immediate wants. Wherefore, warming some water, I washed his foot, which, on account of a long-continued swelling, had an ulcer, from which matter issued, and consequently required attention; and also warming some wine, I brought it, and asked him to taste it, for I saw by his countenance that he was entirely worn out with want and sickness.

"When I had finished tending him, he laid himself quietly on his bed, and I sat down beside him. As he was silent, I said: 'I see, my Lord Bishop, that you have been troubled with much infirmity since we left you, and we think it strange that you would not, when we departed, suffer us to leave some one to wait upon you'. He answered: 'This happened by the providence and will of God, so that, destitute of all presence and help of men, I should suffer some adversity; for, after you were gone away from me, immediately my disease began to press heavily upon me; therefore, going out from my cell, I came here, that whosoever of you should

come to minister to me should find me here, and have no need to enter my cell. Now, from the time I came in here, I have never moved hence, nor changed the position of my limbs, but have remained quietly where I am for these five days and nights.' Whereupon I said: 'And how, my Lord Bishop, could you live thus? Have you remained here without taking food for so long a time?' Whereupon, lifting up the covering of his bed, on which he was sitting, he showed me five onions concealed therein, and said: 'This has been my food during these days; for whensoever my mouth burned with intolerable dryness or thirst, by tasting these I refreshed and recruited myself'. (One of these onions appeared to have been a little eaten; less, however, than one-half of it.) 'And, over and above,' he continued, 'never have my enemies, during all the time I have abode in this island, assailed me with so many persecutions as during these five days.'

"I did not have to ask what these temptations were of which he spoke: I only asked him to allow some of us to wait upon him. To

this he assented, and retained several of our monks, among whom there was the elder Baeda, the Priest, who had always been accustomed to render him the most familiar services. And also, he specially named another person from among the brethren, whom he wished to remain with the others in attendance upon himself: one, to wit, who was grievously afflicted by a long continued diarrhœa, which had baffled the skill of the physicians.

"He was a man noted for religious prudence and gravity, and well deserving to be a witness of the last words which the man of God uttered, and in what manner he departed to the Lord.

"Meanwhile returning home, I told the brethren that our venerable Father had given orders that he should be buried in his own cell. 'But it seems to me,' I said, 'that it would be more just and meet for us to ask him to permit his body to be translated hither, and be deposited in the church with suitable honour.' What I said was approved by all, and, coming to the Bishop, we asked

him, saying, 'We dare not, Lord Bishop, despise your command, wherein you have given orders to be buried here; nevertheless, it seems good to us to ask permission to transfer your body, so that we may be allowed to have you to remain among us'. But he said—'It was my wish to rest in the body here, where I have fought my little wrestling (such as it was) for the Lord, and where I desire to finish my course, and whence I hope to be raised up by the merciful Judge to a crown of glory. I think it would be more advantageous to you that I should rest here, on account of the trouble you shall have from fugitives and evil-doers, who will probably fly for refuge to my tomb; for whatsoever I am myself, I know that the report shall go abroad of me that I am a servant of Christ, and you will necessarily have very often to intercede for such persons with the powerful of the world, and so to undergo much labour and trouble for the possession of my body.'* But on our beseeching him

* This anticipation was fully verified, for the privilege of sanctuary was claimed in the right of the body of St.

much and long, and assuring him that labour of this kind would be both light and agreeable, after taking counsel with himself, the man of the Lord replied—'If you would really overcome what I had disposed, and should bear my body from this place, it seems to me that it would be better, in this case, to bury me inside your church so that you may visit my tomb whenever you please, and have it in your power to admit, or not admit, those that come hither'. We thanked him for his permission and counsel; we knelt down for his blessing, and returning home, from that forth we did not cease to visit him frequently.

"And when his sickness continuing, he saw that his dissolution was at hand, he com-

Cuthbert, and it existed at Durham until the suppression of the monastery.

The Abbey Church and all the churchyard was the sanctuary, and any one seeking safety from pursuit was directed to knock at the north door, when it was at once opened to him by the officers of the church, who always slept in chambers over the door; and food and lodgings were provided for such offenders for thirty-seven days, until the prior and convent could get them conveyed out of the Bishopric.

manded that he should be carried back to his little cell and oratory. Now it was the third hour of the day. . . . There we accordingly carried him; for through his excessive weakness he was unable to walk. But when we came to the door, we begged him to allow someone of us to enter along with him and minister to him, for no one but himself for many years had ever entered therein. And looking round he perceived the brother, who, as I mentioned before, was ill of a flux, and he said let Unalsted (Walsted) enter along with me—for that was the brother's name. Unalsted accordingly remained with him within until the ninth hour; and going out, he called me, saying, 'The Bishop commands you to come with him. Moreover, I can tell you a new and very marvellous circumstance that has happened to me, for from the time that I went in thither, and touched the Bishop to lead him to the oratory, I forthwith felt that I was freed from all trouble of my long infirmity.'

"Now I went to him about the ninth hour

of the day (that is, three o'clock), and I found him reclining in a corner of his oratory opposite the altar; and I myself began to sit down, but he did not speak much, for the burthen of his infirmity prevented him from speaking with ease. But on my pressingly asking him to leave some words which might be considered as a bequest and as a last farewell to the brethren, he began to speak a few words, but they were powerful, concerning peace and humility, and cautioning us against those persons that choose rather to wrestle against such things than to take delight therein. 'Keep peace,' he said, 'one with another, and heavenly charity; and when necessity demands you to hold counsel as to your state, take great care that you be of one mind in your conclusions; and, moreover, maintain mutual concord with other servants of Christ, and despise not the household of the faith, who come to you seeking hospitality, but be careful to receive them, to entertain them, and to send them away with friendly kindness; and do not think that you are better than other followers of the same

faith and conversation. But with those that err from the unity of Catholic peace, either by not celebrating Easter at the proper time, or by living perversely, have no communion. And know and hold in memory, that if necessity should compel you to choose one of two evils, I would much rather that you should dig up my bones from the tomb, and, carrying them away with you, desert these parts, and dwell wheresoever God may provide—much rather, I say, than, by giving any consent to the iniquities of schismatics, you should submit your neck to their yoke. Strive then most diligently to learn and to observe the Catholic Statutes of the Fathers; practise also with great solicitude those rules of regular life, which, by my ministry, the divine mercy hath vouchsafed to give you. For I know that although I have lived contemptible to some, nevertheless, after my departure, you shall see more openly what I have been, and how that the doctrine which I have taught is not to be despised.' These and the like words the man of God spoke at intervals; for, as we have said, the greatness

of his infirmity deprived him of the power of much speaking.

"Thus he spent a quiet day till evening, in the expectation of future blessedness; yea, and tranquilly continued the wakeful night also in prayer. Now when the wonted time of nocturn prayers, that is, of matins, was come, after receiving the salutary sacraments (of penance and extreme unction) at my hands, he fortified his departure, which he knew had now come, by the communion of the Body and Blood of our Lord;* and having lifted up his eyes to heaven and extended his hands on high, his soul, intent on heavenly praises, departed to the joys of the kingdom of heaven."

O blessed Saint, intercede for us at the hour of our death, that we, too, poor miserable sinners, thy children, may have the grace to be united to thee for ever before the great white throne of God!

His departure took place early on the morning of Wednesday, the 20th of March,

* It was customary in the Saxon Church to administer the last anointing before the Viaticum.

A.D. 687. Herefrith at once announced the sad tidings to the brethren, who accompanied him, and who had spent the whole night in prayer, and who were at that moment chanting at matins, the fifty-ninth psalm, then as now, part of the ferial office for the fourth day of the week, beginning with the words, "*Deus repulisti nos*," "O God Thou hast cast us off, and hast destroyed us: Thou hast been angry, and hast had mercy upon us". One of the monks ran and lighted two torches, and holding them in each hand went up to an elevated spot and made the signal before agreed upon, to one of the brothers, who had been appointed to watch upon the watch-tower on the heugh, which probably stood on the spot from which the coastguard-men still look out upon the ocean.

Seeing the lights, he at once ran down to the Church, where the whole community were assembled for matins, and announced to them that the sainted Bishop and Father was no more. By a singular coincidence, the monks were at that moment engaged in chanting the same psalm which their brethren

had been singing at Farne. This fact was remembered afterwards and was considered to be prophetic of some grievous calamity or temptation, we know not what, which fell upon the monastery shortly after the death of the holy Bishop, and was put to flight and healed by the prudence and piety of Bishop Eadbert, the successor of St. Wilfred, who for a brief period succeeded St. Cuthbert.

Chapter XXII.

HIS BODY IS TAKEN TO LINDISFARNE.

THE body of the venerable Father, swathed in the linen sheet given to him by Verca the Abbess, and lying in Cudda's coffin, was carried down to the shore and placed in a boat, and so conveyed to Lindisfarne. On its arrival, it was received by a great multitude of people, together with the whole body of monks, "and with choirs of choristers," and in slow and solemn procession and the chanting of the sublime psalms of penitence, borne into the monastic church.

It has been a pleasing occupation to me to try and trace the path by which the sacred Body of the Saint was carried. Probably the boat from Farne would land in the bay which stretches from the point of the rock at the east termination of the heugh, to the castle. The bearers of the sacred relics would then climb the slight declivity called the Palace Hill, and passing through St. Cuthbert's Square, and along Fenkle Street, into the market-place in which the cross now stands, would from thence proceed through the churchyard to the west door of the Cathedral. On arriving at the church, the venerable Body was clothed in all the episcopal vestments, and then deposited in its stone coffin on the right side of the altar. There it remained undisturbed for eleven years.

Chapter XXIII.

HIS GRAVE IS OPENED, AND THE BODY OF THE SAINT FOUND ENTIRE AND INCORRUPT.

IN the year 698 and during the episcopate of Eadbert, the seventh Bishop of Lindisfarne, the monks, wishing to place the relics of the Saint in a shrine raised above the floor of the church, with the permission of the Bishop, on the 20th of March, the anniversary of St. Cuthbert's death, opened his tomb, expecting that by this time the Body would have been consumed and nothing left but the skeleton. To their amazement and joy, they found the whole Body as entire as when he was living, and more like one in a sound sleep than one who was dead. All the vestments, moreover, with which he had been clothed were not only unsoiled, but even appeared in all their freshness, and were of marvellous brightness. Trembling with fear at the sight, the monks hastened to inform the Bishop, who was

spending the Lent on the little island where St. Cuthbert had lived for a time before migrating to Farne. They took with them the chasuble in which the Saint had been vested as a proof of the truth of their story. The holy Bishop kissed the sacred relic, ordered the monks to swathe the body in new garments, and to place it in the coffin, or chest which had been prepared. Not long after, on the 6th of May, the Bishop himself died and was buried in the grave in which the relics of St. Cuthbert had reposed. The monks did as they were directed by the Bishop, and wrapping the sacred remains in new raiment, they laid it in a light chest upon the pavement of the sanctuary on the right side of the high altar in the Cathedral Church of St. Peter.

The incorrupt Body of the Saint reposed in peace in this shrine for nearly one hundred years, and was visited by innumerable pilgrims, in whose behalf many miracles were wrought, as is duly recorded in the pages of Simeon and Reginald.

During this period the See of Lindisfarne

was successively occupied by Eadfrid, Ethelwold — during whose episcopate Clolwulf, King of Northumberland, resigned his crown and became a monk at Lindisfarne—Cynewulf, and Higbald.

Chapter XXIV.

THE DANES LAND ON THE NORTH COAST. THEY PLUNDER THE MONASTERY OF LINDISFARNE.

IN the tenth year of the reign of Higbald, who succeeded to the episcopate in 780, and was eleventh Bishop in succession to St. Aidan, the Danes landed upon the coast of Northumberland. Owing to the disorder which prevailed in the state of the kingdom, no opposition was made to the landing of these barbarians. They marched without impediment through the bowels of the land, ravaging and destroying everything in their course. Neither age nor sex were respected, and nothing, however sacred, escaped their fury.

Churches and monasteries, rich with the offerings of the faithful, were the special objects of their attack. Altars and shrines were plundered, priests and monks were massacred, and every step of their progress was marked with blood and rapine.

On the 7th of June, they came to the Church of Lindisfarne, which fell into their hands an easy prey. Not content with despoiling the altars and carrying off the gold and silver ornaments which enriched the church, they exercised every possible cruelty upon the monks, who had endeavoured to conceal themselves. The greater number were discovered, and some were at once slaughtered on the island, others were stripped naked and compelled to undergo every indignity, and others were drowned in the sea.

The news of this calamity filled all the nation of the Saxons with shame and sorrow. Lindisfarne had long been to them an object of peculiar reverence.

The learned Alcuin received the account at the Court of Charlemagne, and evinced by his tears the intensity of his grief. "See," he

writes to Ethelred, King of Northumberland, "the Church of St. Cuthbert is sprinkled with the blood of its Priests, and robbed of all its ornaments; that place, the most venerable of all places in Britain, has been given a prey to the Gentiles."

The Danish invaders were so far from being satiated with slaughter and plunder, that the next year brought with it a second descent, and a repetition of their sacrilegious outrages. But the kingdom of Northumbria for awhile laid aside its internal strife, and, aided by the Mercians, surprised and cut off the invading hosts as they were plundering Jarrow-on-the-Tyne. Bishop Higbald and the monks who had escaped the fury of the Danes hastened to return to their church, and were filled with joy to find that though stripped of all its other riches, it still retained the treasure they valued most, the incorrupt Body of the Saint, which had in a wonderful way been left undisturbed in its shrine.

We must now pass over an interval of eighty-two years more, which brings us to the episcopate of Eardulph, the sixteenth and

last Bishop of Lindisfarne, A.D. 875. In this year the Danes, those implacable foes of the Saxons, once more landed on the northern shores. They first attacked the city of York. Thence they marched northwards as far as the Tyne; but here their progress was partly checked by the armies of Osbert and Ella, the rival kings of Northumbria, who for a time laid aside their animosities, and made common cause against the common foe. But the Danes in the end were victorious, and then began their wild course of bloodshed and destruction. The Monastery of St. Oswin, at the mouth of the Tyne, was plundered and set on fire; and, with their terrible chief Halfdene at their head, they, for the second time, directed their steps towards Lindisfarne.

At the tidings of their approach, consternation and dismay fell upon the Bishop Eardulph and the monks. The Bishop hastily assembled the brethren to deliberate upon the course to be adopted. Their only safety lay in instant flight; but remembering the dying injunctions of their saintly patron, they decided to carry his Body with them.

The shrine was instantly removed from the choir, and in the wooden coffin in which the remains of Cuthbert reposed were placed the following relics: the head of St. Oswald, a few bones of St. Aidan, the bones of the Bishops Eata, Eadfrid, and Ethelwold. A number of clerks were then selected from the attendants on the Bishop to bear the coffin to a place of safety. When all these preparations had been completed, with tears and lamentations, the monks bade farewell to their beloved monastery, deserting, as Symeon has said, their noble church, the mother-church of the nation of the Bernicians, and the residence of so many saints. This occurred in the year of our Lord 875, two hundred and forty years after the foundation of the see by St. Oswald and St. Aidan, and one hundred and eighty from the death of St. Cuthbert. On the arrival of the Danes, the monastery was pillaged and given to the flames.

The Bishop and monks, with their precious treasure, took refuge in the Northumbrian hills, where they were joined by a large num-

ber of people from the island and mainland, flying from the fury of the infidels to place themselves under the protection of their glorious patron and father. For seven long years, and more, the army of the Danes held possession of the whole country, spreading ruin and desolation on every side.

"Everywhere," says Symeon, "the monasteries and churches were burnt, the servants and hand-maidens of Christ subjected to every indignity and insult," and, in a word, fire and sword were carried from the eastern sea to the western. It thus happened that the Bishop, and they who accompanied the holy Body, nowhere found any place of repose; but, going forwards and backwards, hither and thither, they fled before the face of the cruel and relentless barbarians.

It is not my intention to enter into a detailed account of these wanderings. Those who wish to possess themselves of all the particulars of these journeyings may consult the pages of Archbishop Eyre's fascinating volume.

It is indeed a story of passing and

marvellous interest. I know nothing to surpass it in sacred or profane history. That a numerous company of men, with their wives and children, should forsake their homes, and expose themselves to all the hardships of such a life, without shelter, without a place to rest, often without food, in order to protect the Body of their patron Saint, and to save it from profanation and sacrilege—that they should wander to and fro, like the Israelites of old in the desert, through the almost inaccessible depths of the thickly-wooded mountains, and through trackless marsh and morass, never murmuring or repining, are facts which must fill us with admiration and wonder. There is hardly a spot in the north of England and south of Scotland which they did not visit, and in every place where they halted, even for a night, offerings of every kind were made to the Saint. "Some, on bended knees, offered him money, others brought precious garments and silks, others gave linen and flax, woollen cloths and fleeces of wool; and those who could contribute no more gave bread and cheese." At first seven

men were chosen to bear the sacred bier on their shoulders, but afterwards it would appear, from Reginald's account, that a car or vehicle of some kind was provided, and in the end a horse. These bearers were treated with special respect and reverence, and were designated by a surname derived from the nature of their office, and their descendants for generations were held in high honour, and it was looked upon as a thing to be proud of that one belonged to the race of those who had carried the Body of St. Cuthbert. None but one of their band was permitted to touch the shrine in which the sacred remains were deposited. The name of one of their descendants has been handed down to our times as the master-mason who built the beautiful church at Pittington, near Durham.

A list of the places they visited in their wanderings was compiled by Prior Wessington in 1416, and placed over the choir door in the Cathedral of Durham; and upon each spot where they halted a church was raised, dedicated to St. Cuthbert. These churches and chapels are scattered profusely all over

the ancient kingdom of Northumbria, and serve as landmarks, by which we may trace the course of the wanderings of the Saint's Body. Towards the end of the sixth year, the Bishop and his companions began to despair of finding a peaceful and permanent abode in England; and a terrible famine having broken out, occasioned by the impossibility of cultivating the land during the years that the Danes were ravaging the country, they came to the determination of abandoning Northumberland, and seeking refuge in Ireland.

Chapter XXV.

ATTEMPTED FLIGHT TO IRELAND.

IN consequence of this resolution, the Bishop Eardulph, and Eldred the Abbot, secretly assembled the oldest and most experienced of their followers, and in confidence communicated their design to them. After carefully weighing the reasons, they unanimously concurred to undertake the voyage. A ship was engaged to meet the little band

at the mouth of the Derwent, at Workington, in Cumberland.

The Body of St. Cuthbert was put on board, and those in the secret embarked, and the rest of the younger monks, and the laymen who had followed the Body from Lindisfarne, were left behind in ignorance of the step which had been decided upon. The ship set sail, but the scheme was frustrated by a violent tempest which arose almost as soon as they had quitted the port. The vessel refused to obey its rudder, and became perfectly unmanageable, and was so violently tossed upon the waves, that it narrowly escaped total shipwreck. Whilst rolling on its side from the fury of the storm, a copy of the Gospels, adorned with gold and jewels, fell overboard into the sea.*

As soon as the Bishop and the few who had been anxious to leave England landed safely on the shore, they fell upon their knees, shedding tears, through shame and sorrow, and earnestly prayed for forgiveness; whilst those who had been left behind, and who had before "wept for grief, now shed tears of joy."

The first care of the Bishop was to search for the book they had lost, and, to his inexpressible delight, it was found at Whitehorn, upon the opposite coast of the Solway, having been washed upon the sands by the tide.* After this adventure, which diminished their confidence and damped their ardour, and in consequence of the famine which devastated the country, we cannot be surprised that the greater part of the band of followers, wearied with the labour of several years of toilsome travel, and worn with hunger and the want of every comfort, withdrew from the company. The only ones that remained were the Bishop, the Abbot, and the seven faithful guardians, who had never deserted their post as protectors of the Body of the Saint. It was then that it became necessary, owing to the

* This copy of the four Gospels was written by Bishop Eadfrid, St. Cuthbert's successor. It was taken with the monks to Durham, and afterwards restored to Lindisfarne, and remained there until the dissolution. It is now in the British Museum; and a costly binding was provided for it, in place of the one which had been stolen at the Reformation, by the late Dean Waddington of Durham. It is fair to add that, according to some, this Book is in the Chapter Library at Durham.

diminished number of their followers, to provide a horse to draw the car upon which the Body was laid.

Chapter XXVI.

THE WANDERERS FIND SHELTER AT CRAIKE —GUTHLAKE PROCLAIMED KING.

ANOTHER year was spent in their desolate wanderings, and after suffering great hardships from the famine, especially in the wild and extensive land of the Picts, who then occupied the whole of the country north of the estuaries of the Forth and the Clyde, the faithful monks arrived with their treasure at Craike, in the neighbourhood of York, in the autumn of the year 882.

Craike was one of the gifts of King Egfrid to our Saint on the day of his consecration, and St. Cuthbert had afterwards founded a monastery there, which at that time was occupied by a body of monks, who had returned to it after the visit of the Danes. The Abbot received the wanderers with open

arms and gave them shelter, and there they remained for four months.

The Danes had by this time in a great measure established themselves in Northumbria ; but Halfdene, their King, had been compelled by the hatred of his subjects to quit the kingdom, and the invaders were left without a leader. At this juncture St. Cuthbert appeared in a dream to Eadred, the Abbot, and commanded him to single out as their future King Guthlake, the son of Hardicanute, one of the Danish chieftains, who had been sold as a slave, and was living in servitude at Whittingham, in Northumberland. The Abbot having discovered the residence of this prince, paid the price of his ransom, and according to the command of St. Cuthbert, proclaimed him King on St. Oswin's Hill at Tynemouth, by placing upon his right arm a bracelet, the emblem of royalty. "By appointing," says the historian of the Church of Durham, "the son of a Danish general of fame, and of revered memory amongst his countrymen, the minds of the people were conciliated, and under

the influence of the Patron Saint the old Northumbrians were reconciled to his government." Guthlake showed his gratitude to St. Cuthbert, and under his protection the Bishop and monks settled at Cuncasestre (now Chester-le-Street) in the beginning of the year 883, and there built a cathedral of wood, which was profusely endowed by the King. Soon afterwards the Danish King gave in perpetual succession to St. Cuthbert the whole of the land between the Wear and the Tees, and made his church a place to which fugitives could fly in case of need, and where they enjoyed inviolable sanctuary for the space of thirty-seven days. King Alfred, to whom Guthred was gradually becoming a dependant prince, confirmed the gift, and together they bestowed upon the Saint other privileges and immunities, thus preparing the way for the temporal princedom of the Bishops of Durham, and the magnificent prerogatives of the patrimony of St. Cuthbert.

CHESTER-LE-STREET.

CHESTER-LE-STREET.

Chapter XXVII.

EPISCOPAL SEE FOUNDED AT CHESTER-LE-STREET.

ABOUT half-way between Newcastle and Durham, shut in from the north-east by ranges of hill and rising grounds, but open on the south and west to the full radiancy of the morning and noonday sun, lies the ancient and historical Roman station of Chester-le-Street. "Its position," says a modern writer, "on the great road midway between the two towns, its size, its luxuries and arts, as instanced in its relics of altars, bronzes, and pottery, and, finally, its having been selected as the site of a church and establishment from the earliest times, with the Roman features in both Saxon and modern names, would lead us to conclude

that a thriving military town was established here from an early period of imperial rule, and, as we see by its coins, it was one of the last to be deserted in the empire's fall." In this pleasant city the Body of St. Cuthbert rested, and his successors, as bishops of Chester-le-Street, carried on the line of the Northumbrian episcopate for one hundred and thirteen years. The present church, doubtless resting on the site of the original cathedral of wood, and of its Norman successor, built in 1045 by Bishop Egelric, was raised by Bec, the powerful and magnificent Prince-Bishop of Durham, who made it a collegiate church, with a dean and five canons. It was dedicated to St. Mary and St. Cuthbert.

Every traveller by the Team Valley line will have admired its graceful spire, rising to the height of one hundred and fifty-six feet, and resting upon an octagonal tower, a structure as beautiful as it is unique.

The interior of this handsome church has, alas! fallen into the hands of the *restorer*, and but few of its original features are left.

In the nineteenth year after the Body of St. Cuthbert had found a home at Chester-le-Street, died the venerable Bishop Eardulph, the last Bishop of Lindisfarne and the first of Chester-le-Street, who for forty-six years had ruled over the See of St. Aidan, and who had, in spite of his age, borne all the toils and trials of the seven years' wandering. To this stout-hearted prelate succeeded eight other bishops of Chester-le-Street, and during their episcopacy the church of St. Cuthbert was enriched with many valuable gifts in money and in land. Kings and bishops made pilgrimages to the shrine of the Saint, and presented costly offerings in gold and silver and precious stuffs, banners and vestments.

King Alfred on his death-bed enjoined his son and successor, Edward, always to hold St. Cuthbert and his church in the highest reverence and affection. Edward laid the same injunctions on his son, Athelstan, and this latter prince, on his march to Scotland at the head of his army, visited the shrine, and made many truly royal gifts to the

church. After his death, his brother, King Edmund, who succeeded him, also made a pilgrimage to the relics of St. Cuthbert, and presented to the church, with princely munificence, offerings of gold and precious vestments, and confirmed and augmented all the privileges granted by his predecessors.

We have now come to the year 895, when Aldune, the ninth Bishop, occupied the episcopal throne. In this year occurred an event which had the most momentous bearing on the fortunes of the church, and led to the final transfer of the Body of St. Cuthbert, and of the episcopal see, with all its honours and immunities, to the lordly Cathedral of Durham.

Chapter XXVIII.

SECOND FLIGHT. THE BODY OF THE SAINT TAKEN TO RIPON.

THE Danes once more made an irruption into Northumberland, and, admonished by a revelation from heaven, the Bishop and "all the people, who were styled the people

of St. Cuthbert," fled with the Body of the Saint to Ripon, which, from its inland situation, afforded a trustworthy security against the inroads of the barbarians.

The paternal care of their Heavenly Father followed them in their flight, for not one of the many persons who accompanied the Bishop, from the least to the greatest, was afflicted with any infirmity, nor did they suffer inconvenience or fatigue from the long and wearisome journey. They remained at Ripon about four months, and when peace was restored, set out on their return to Chester-le-street.

This sojourn at Ripon of the Body of St. Cuthbert forms a link between the great Saint of Durham and the noble-hearted Wilfrid—who, when Cuthbert lived in solitude upon the tempest-tossed Farne, almost single-handed, fought the battle of the rights of the Church and the episcopate and sovereignity of Rome.

There cannot be a greater contrast than that afforded by the lives of these two Saints. Wilfrid, the great bishop, offspring of a noble

race, was a man of war, and his position and influence involved him in perpetual conflict with the rough Saxon kings. Cuthbert's life was mainly spent in ascetic retirement, far removed from the excitement and toils of the struggle. Yet how many points of resemblance united them together. Cuthbert had the indomitable courage and pluck of the great Anglo-Saxon bishop, and the high-souled Wilfrid possessed all the tenderness of heart of the gentle disciple of the Celtic Aidan.

DURHAM.

Fortress of God ! colossal abbey ! thou,
In thy stern grandeur, shalt outlive the forms
That thus unqueen thee, and above the storms
Of coming change shalt lift thy reverend brow.
Once more shall host and sacrifice be thine,
When Cuthbert's bones, concealed from curious scorn,
Down the grand aisles in triumph shall be borne
With jubilant psalms, by some new Palatine.

—FABER.

DURHAM.

Chapter XXIX.

THE BISHOP AND MONKS LEAVE RIPON AND SETTLE AT DURHAM.

WHEN the travellers had advanced to a spot called by Symeon Wardelaw, it was revealed to them that Dunholm or Durham was to be their resting-place and future home. There has been much discussion as to the exact locality of Wardelaw, but there seems to be but little doubt that the place indicated is that wooded hill to the south-east of the city, which commands a view of the site of the present Cathedral and Castle. Overjoyed at this manifestation of the will of their great patron, the Bishop and clergy bore the Body of the Saint to the summit of that splendid plateau, which the Wear encircles, and there deposited it in a little church constructed of

the boughs of trees. A well-founded tradition has been handed down to us that the spot selected for this temporary chapel was the one upon which St. Mary-le-Bow in the Bailey now stands.

"When the whole assembly" (I am quoting the words of Symeon) "accompanied the holy Body of Father Cuthbert into Durham, it was discovered that the place, although naturally strong, was not easily habitable, for the whole space, with the exception of a moderate sized plain in the midst was covered with a very dense wood. Bishop Aldune, assisted by all the populace, and by Uhtred, Earl of the Northumbrians, cut down the whole of the timber in a brief space of time, and made the place habitable." The entire population of the district, which extends from the river Coquet to the Tees, readily and willingly rendered assistance, first to the necessary work of clearing the ground, and at a later period to the erection of the church. When the wood had been uprooted, and a residence assigned by lot to each person, the Bishop,

"in the warmth of his love for Christ and St. Cuthbert," commenced to build a suitable cathedral in stone, on a large scale, and devoted all his energies to its completion. In the meantime the sacred remains had been translated from their temporary resting place in the little church formed of boughs, which we have already mentioned, and removed into another called the White Church, and which appears to have been a portion of the great church which was being raised by the Bishop, but not yet finished, and there it remained during the time in which the larger fabric was being completed.

The great stone church of Aldune, so ardent was the zeal displayed by the people, took only three years in building, and on the 4th of September in the year 999, "to the great joy of all and the honour of God, the incorruptible Body of the most holy Father Cuthbert" was solemnly translated, and with becoming reverence and honour deposited in the place prepared for its reception. This translation is the one commemorated by the annual festival still kept in this diocese. Three hundred and

sixty-one years had now elapsed from the foundation of the Northumbrian see, and three hundred and nine from the death of St. Cuthbert. From this epoch dates the transfer of the episcopal see from Chester-le-Street to Durham, and the succession of the thirty-six Bishops from Aldune to Cuthbert Tunstall, the last Catholic Bishop. I pass over a period of well-nigh fifty years. During this time devotion to the great Saint increased in intensity, and the church of Durham grew in wealth and importance and power. Villas and lands in the counties of Northumberland. Durham, and York were lavishly bestowed upon the Saint and the "company of St. Cuthbert".

Great events had in the meantime occurred to change the destiny of England. Harold, the last Saxon king, had been defeated and slain at Hastings in the year 1066, and William the Conqueror had been crowned King of England on Christmas Day in the Abbey Church at Westminster. Though the rest of the country at once submitted to the arms of William, the men of Northumber-

land, of which the patrimony of St. Cuthbert still formed a part, for the first three years of his reign set the Conqueror at defiance. To suppress this resistance William sent Robert Cumin and his earls into the North, with full powers to reduce it to obedience. Cumin reached Durham, but on the very night of his arrival, the people rose against their invaders, and set fire to the house in which Cumin lodged, and the general and many of his followers were burnt alive. Another commander was despatched by the King, but was, as the people firmly believed, providentially prevented from reaching the Bishopric.

At length William himself undertook the expedition, and arrived at York, threatening to lay waste the land with fire and sword. When the news of his approach was known in Durham, the Bishop Egelwin, the fourth in succession from Aldune, at once called together his clergy, and it was resolved to remove the Body of St. Cuthbert to Lindisfarne.

Chapter XXX.

FLIGHT TO LINDISFARNE.

THEIR flight was impeded by the severity of the December frosts, and on the first day they did not proceed beyond Jarrow. On the following night they halted at Bedlington, and another day's journey brought them to Tuggall, in the parish of Bamborough. A chapel dedicated to St. Cuthbert was afterwards built at Tuggall, the ruins of which were standing a few years ago, but have now been, unfortunately, razed to the ground. It was not until the evening of the fourth day after leaving Durham that the fugitives arrived at the strand opposite the island. The night was dark and stormy, and to their dismay the tide was at its full. The protection of the Saint did not fail them in their need. To their relief and joy the waters of the sea retired and left them a dry passage across the beaten track. It seems probable from this narrative that some kind of partial restoration of the Monastery at Lindisfarne

had taken place, and that the clergy, with their precious burthen, found shelter as well as safety in their former abode. They sojourned there about three months, and in the beginning of the following Lent (1070), returned once more to Durham.

Chapter XXXI.

BENEDICTINE MONKS INTRODUCED INTO DURHAM.

IN the eighteenth year of the reign of the Conqueror, William of St. Calais, Abbot of the Monastery of St. Vincent in Normandy, generally called William of St. Carileph, was chosen to succeed Walcher, the first Norman Bishop of Durham, who had been killed in a popular tumult at Gateshead. Though brought up a secular priest, Carileph had become a Benedictine Monk, and was strongly inclined to the discipline and order of the monastic rule which he had adopted.

With the sanction of Archbishop Lanfranc and the King, and by the authority of Pope

Gregory VII., Bishop Carileph made a most important change in the Cathedral body. He displaced the secular Canons, who were the successors of the monks who had accompanied St. Cuthbert's Body from Lindisfarne, and who, if the monk Symeon is to be relied upon, seem to have fallen from their original institute and fervour.*

In their place he established the Benedictine monks from Wearmouth and Jarrow, who had been restored to these monasteries, laid waste by the Danes, by Walcher, Bishop of Durham. On the twenty-eighth of May they were introduced into the church of St. Cuthbert, and "there the Bull of the Apostolic Pope, given by the authority of the Blessed Peter, chief of the Apostles, was exhibited† to the assembled multitudes".

By this Bull, and a charter‡ granted by

* "Nomen tantum Canonicorum habentes, sed in nullo Canonicorum regulam sequentes."—Symeon.

† Gregory's Bull is printed in the appendix to the *Historiæ Dunelmensis Scriptores Tres*. p. 7, Ed. 1839.

‡ There is no such charter of King William now in existence, nor does the earliest cartulary, which dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century, contain a copy of it.—Greenwell.

William the Conqueror, and witnessed by Queen Matilda, Archbishop Lanfranc and others, and by another deed of Bishop William de Sancto Carilefo, the grants which had been made to St. Cuthbert were confirmed.

These gifts comprised the churches of Hexham and Lindisfarne, and all the parishes between the Tees and the Tweed; the town of Carlisle, and all the circumjacent land; Teviotdale, and the whole district belonging to it.

By the same charter the privileges and laws of St. Cuthbert were confirmed for the second time, and to the Priors were granted all the honours and dignities of Abbots, with the Abbot's stall on the left of the choir, and the right to celebrate all the higher offices of the church in the absence of the Bishops, and all the privileges, dignities, powers and honours enjoyed by the Deans of the Metropolitan Cathedral Church of York.*

* Two copies, both professing to be original documents, and having once had the attestation of what passed for the seal of William of St. Carilefo, still remain in the Treasury of the Dean and Chapter of Durham. Canon Greenwell shows that this charter, and another attributed to Bishop William, are spurious.

"When this had been done, the Bishop recommended these monks to Mary, the most blessed Mother of God, and to his holy patron, Cuthbert, and delivered over the church to them, and them to the church." Next, in the solemn Mass, he gave his blessing to those persons who had promised that they would fix their residence in this place, and he bound them by a link, which could not be severed, to the Body of the most holy Father Cuthbert. Not long after this occurrence, this great Bishop, not well content with the smallness and homeliness of the existing Cathedral, determined to raise a new and magnificent church worthy of the great see and its saintly patron.

Chapter XXXII.

BUILDING OF PRESENT CATHEDRAL.

HAVING made an arrangement with the monks, that they should undertake the building of the monastery, he, on the eleventh of August, A.D. 1093, assisted by Turgot the

Prior, and Malcolm, King of Scotland, laid the foundations of the church which we now see in all its stately beauty.

There is something about this glorious cathedral which exercises a marvellous fascination over the minds of all, such as no other edifice does. Whether it is owing to its unrivalled site, or to its solemnity, and massive proportions of design and outline, or to the mystery which hangs over the tomb of its saintly Patron, I cannot tell, but all writers bear witness to the impression which it makes upon them.

First, let us take the site.

What church is there in Christendom which can boast of so striking a position? The river Wear, here broad and rapid, makes so sweeping a curve that the promontory it carves out is almost an island. The elevated platform thus formed, rising from the river banks, is clothed from base to summit with the foliage of stately trees, and from the midst of these the massive foundations and buttresses of the Galilee seem to grow out of the sheer perpendicular rocks, and to make

part of them, while high above rock and gable and roof, the majestic Western towers, with their picturesque battlements, like twin giants rise up one hundred and sixty feet, and over all grouping with them, but dominating them, the great lantern of the central tower loses itself in the bright blue sky.

The historian of *The Monks of the West*, when this glorious vision met his view for the first time, burst out into words of eloquent admiration and wonder.

"This magnificent building," he exclaims, "with its three stories of arched windows, its three towers, its double transepts, forms with the ancient castle, built by William the Conqueror, a monument at once of religion and art as admirable as it is little known. It can be compared only to Pisa, to Toledo, to Nurenberg, or Marienburg. It has even a great advantage over all these celebrated places, in the beauty of the landscape which encloses it. It is the sole existing example of a splendid Cathedral situated in the midst of an old wood, on the height of a rock, the

abrupt descent of which is bathed by a narrow and rapid river."

I am at a loss to decide which is the best coign of vantage from which to view this wondrous pile, for whatever point is chosen, seems, until you pass to another, to present it in its grandest aspect. When the setting sun is shedding a flood of crimson and gold upon pinnacle and tower, take your stand on the elevated mound upon which the Railway Station is built, and the eye will command a marvellous scene. At your feet lie the Cathedral and Castle towering above river and wood and rock, and the straggling city nestled close under the grey battlements of the Castle or creeping tortuously up the long narrow street which leads to St. Giles Church. When you have thought that it would not be possible to find anything more strikingly grand and beautiful, pass over Framwellgate Bridge and through the Market-place, and ascending Claypath and Gilesgate, descend again by the lane which passes by the Training College, or mount to the top of Maiden Law, or to the hill upon which

stands the Observatory, from which the whole length of the Cathedral extends itself before you, like some huge three-decker, stranded amidst the fair pastures and sunny gardens which surrounded its Southern front, and you will confess how difficult it is to say which view surpasses the rest.

After you have satiated mind and eye by the site and exterior aspect, enter by the great North porch,—and here one who is a thoroughly competent judge shall describe for us the interior. "I assert and with confidence that no grander Norman building exists. Peterborough, Ely, Norwich, and Gloucester in our country, and the great Church of St. Stephen at Caen, magnificent as they are in their earlier portions, shine with a diminished lustre, when compared with the greater glories of Durham.

"I will now make a still bolder assertion and say that no more impressing and inspiring church is to be found in England, nay, I would almost say in Europe. You may go where you will, you may tell me of the vastness of York, the beauties of Lincoln, the

varied and noble architectural features of Canterbury, Winchester, and Lichfield, and the grace of Salisbury, but I say the Cathedral Church of Durham is the grandest structure of them all! Taken in its parts and looking at its wondrous solemnity,—I can use no other word,—at its beautiful proportions and the admirable way in which a great design has been carried out to perfection, Durham Cathedral stands unrivalled." *

Before pulling down the old church built by Aldune, Bishop Carileph erected a handsome tomb in the Cloister Garth, at the eastern angle of the present court, and opposite to the door which leads into the monks' parlour. In this the Body of St. Cuthbert was deposited until the new cathedral was finished. This tomb consisted of a large slab of free-stone, upon which was carved a full-length figure of the Saint, vested in episcopal robes, with chasuble and mitre and crozier. Above this was a wooden pent-house, enclosed with wooden stanchels

* Canon Greenwell.

and covered with lead, like unto a little chapel or church.*

The cathedral commenced by William of St. Calais was completed by him as far as the first large pier in the nave. After his death, in 1096, an interval of three years elapsed before the election of Bishop Flambard in 1099. During this interval the monks went on with the church and built the west side of the transepts and the vaulting of both. Bishop Flambard carried on the nave which had been begun by Carileph as far as the vaulting, which was completed by the monks after Flambard's death in 1128, and before the accession of Bishop Galfrid Rufus in 1133.

* Dean Hume pulled down this monument, and Dean Whittingham, "who could not abide anything that appertained to a goodly religiousness or monastic life," broke in pieces the marble statue of St. Cuthbert which was placed above the tomb when the body of the Saint was removed into the church.

Chapter XXXIII.

TRANSLATION OF THE BODY OF ST. CUTHBERT INTO THE PRESENT CATHEDRAL.

AS soon as the east end of Carileph's church was sufficiently completed, the venerable Body of St. Cuthbert was translated from its temporary shrine in the cloister garth into its final resting-place in the apse behind the high altar.

Very full accounts have been handed down to us describing all the circumstances connected with this translation, and some of them by eye-witnesses. First, there is the long and minute description given by the Bollandists, and drawn from various manuscripts. From these we learn that many differences of opinion prevailed as to the place where the Body of St. Cuthbert was buried, and as to its existing condition. Some venturous spirits threw doubts upon the reported fact of its still being actually in the possession of the monks, saying that it had

perished during their many wanderings and flights, or had been secretly removed to some other place. These reports shook the credit of the monks, and as none of them had ever seen the Body of the Saint, filled them with alarm.

As the day fixed for the translation approached, these secret whisperings of incredulity increased, and found utterance from many of the persons who had been invited to assist at the ceremony. The brethren thereupon came to the resolution to open and examine the tomb, and report upon the state of its contents. For this purpose nine of the elder monks were selected by the Prior Turgot. On the night of the 26th of August, the ten visitors having prepared themselves by fasting and prayer, prostrated themselves before the tomb, and, in fear and trembling, commenced the work of opening it. When they had with much difficulty and labour lifted the outer covering, which was secured with strong bars of iron, they found a chest of wood, carefully covered over with leather, fastened to it with iron nails. After

breaking open the chest, they discovered a second coffin of black oak, carved over the whole of its surface with figures of animals and flowers, and wrapped in a coarse linen cloth which had been dipped in melted wax.

They recognised this chest to be the very one in which the Body of the Saint had been placed at Lindisfarne, eleven years after his death. Filled with joy and at the same time with terror lest in venturing to disturb the sacred remains they might be visited with instant punishment, they fell upon the ground and prayed earnestly that the blessed Saint would by his intercession avert from them the anger of God, if they merited it by their presumption. After this they almost unanimously determined to abandon any further search, lest the vengeance of God should fall upon their rashness. But Turgot, the Prior, insisted upon their proceeding, and the exhortations and encouraging words of one of their number, whose saintly life gave him great influence, having restored their courage and confidence, they set to work to remove the

chest from behind the altar, where it had up to this time remained, into the middle of the choir. They then rolled back the cloth which covered the coffin, and removed the lid. Instead of the Body of the Saint, they found a copy of the Gospels placed upon an inner lid, which rested on three transverse bars of wood, and covered the whole length and breadth of the coffin. By the help of two iron rings fixed at the extremities, it was easily lifted, and below it reposed the object of their search—the venerable Body of St. Cuthbert. It was lying on its right side, wholly entire and flexible in its joints, and resembling rather a person asleep than one dead. At the sight they were seized with great fear and amazement, and retiring to a little distance, fell on their knees, and striking their breasts, they raised their eyes to heaven and recited together the Seven Penitential Psalms. Having finished these, they again approached the coffin, and three of their number, by the order of the Prior, placing their hands under the head, the feet, and the middle of the body, raised it up and laid it

down on a carpet spread on the floor. After removing the numerous relics found in the coffin, no doubt those of the saintly Bishops of Lindisfarne, which, as was narrated, were placed in the coffin on its first removal, they again laid the Body in the chest, as the time for Matins was near, and having chanted the Te Deum, they carried it back to the place behind the altar from which they had brought it.

On the following night the same visitors again assembled in the church, and by his own request were accompanied by Bishop Flambard. The venerable Body of the Saint was again brought into the middle of the choir, and laid upon a cloth prepared for it. We are indebted to Reginald for a very detailed description of its state, and of the robes in which it was clothed.

He tells us that the Saint was of a tall and manly stature, yet neither too tall or too short. That the limbs were all firm, flexible and perfect in all their parts, that they were muscular in the sinews, flexible, with veins full of blood, and with sweet and soft flesh.

The Body was entirely enveloped in a very fine linen sheet, doubtless the one given to the Saint by the Abbess Verca, and which he had carefully preserved for that purpose. Over this appeared the usual episcopal vestments, the amice, alb, stole, fanon, tunic, and dalmatic; the chasuble alone was wanting, it having been removed at the former translation in 689. On the forehead lay a gilt plate or band, richly encrusted with gems, and a mitre covered the head, round which had been wound a napkin of purple colour. A cere-cloth of linen adhered so closely to his cheeks and face and venerable head that it could not be raised in any part. The nose, the outline of which could be seen through the tightly-stretched covering, seemed a little curved, and his chin appeared as if in the lower bone it were furrowed with a double division. This furrow extended to both sides, and a finger might have been put lengthways into it. The space between the neck and the shoulders was partly exposed, and the flesh was devoutly touched by some of those present.

With the Body was found a silver altar, a corporal, a gold chalice, a paten, a pair of silver scissors, and an ivory comb. These were replaced in the coffin, and with them the head of St Oswald. The other relics of the Bishops of Lindisfarne were collected and transferred to another part of the church. They then enveloped the sacred Body, over the vestments, in a new winding sheet of silk, and again carried the coffin back to its former place behind the altar.

The next morning the discovery made the previous night was announced to the brethren, and a solemn act of thanksgiving was performed to make known the triumph of the monks, and to silence the doubts of the incredulous.

But their joy, says the historian of the Anglo-Saxon Church, was interrupted by the rational scepticism of the abbot of a neighbouring monastery. He charged the monks of Durham with ill-judged rashness in daring to undertake so important and unusual an investigation without consulting or inviting the presence of any of the neighbouring clergy.

What guarantee was there for the truth of the statement made by those who were interested? Why not allow the coffin to be opened in the presence of the strangers who had come to be present at the translation? To do so would at once remove all cause of suspicion, but to refuse it would naturally expose the monks to the accusation of imposture and fraud. This unexpected demand, and the scandalous insinuations which accompanied it, excited the indignation of the monks. They exclaimed that their accuser was aiming either at the ruin of their house or their expulsion from the place. They appealed to their character, which had hitherto been unimpeached, and offered to confirm their testimony on oath. "Far be it from us," said they, "to allow this man an opportunity of seeing the sacred remains, through whose means the suspicion of a grievous falsehood has fallen upon us; for of those who yesterday exultantly sang 'Glory be to God on high,' some to-day, through the calumny of this abbot, suspect us of a falsehood."

Whilst this contention was running to great lengths, and there seemed no prospect of bringing it to a peaceful termination, Ralph, the venerable Abbot of the Monastery of Seez in Normandy, and afterwards successively Bishop of Rochester and Archbishop of Canterbury, came forward to offer his services as mediator.

He was a man of great meekness and piety and deeply versed in the holy scriptures, and by his gentle and skilful pleading the Prior and community were reluctantly persuaded to consent to a re-examination of the Body of the Saint.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

PUBLIC EXAMINATION OF THE BODY OF THE SAINT.

ON the morning of the very day appointed for the translation (the dispute being thus happily settled) the following persons entered the oratory vested in albs, the Prior leading the way—viz. the above mentioned

Abbot of Seez, Richard, Abbot of the Monastery of St. Alban, Stephen, Abbot of St. Mary's at York, and Hugh, Abbot of St. Germain at Ollesby (Selby). After these came Alexander, brother of Edgar, King of Scotland, about to succeed his brother in the Kingdom, and William, then chaplain of the Bishop of Durham, but Archbishop of Canterbury after the above named Ralph. Then followed forty other clerics, monks as well as secular clergy. In addition to these there were many of the brethren of the church, for some were assisting the Bishop, who at that very moment was consecrating an Altar in the Cathedral.

When they had all devoutly offered up a prayer, the holy Body was brought into the choir, where the coffin was open by the brethren who had shortly before closed it up.

The Prior raising his hand strictly forbade any one, except the Abbot of Seez, to move a hand to touch either the Body or anything about it. The rest he ordered to stand near, and ascertain the truth with their eyes and not with their hands. The brethren of the

monastery he ordered to watch with vigilant eyes, lest any one in any way should abstract even a particle of thread from the robes that enveloped the Body. His commands were obeyed.

The Abbot, Ralph, unfolding, with the aid of the brethren belonging to the church, the coverings wrapped round the venerable head, raised it a little in both his hands in the sight of all, and bending it in different directions, found it adhering to the rest of the Body, with all the joints of the neck perfect. Then taking hold of the ear, he moved it backwards and forwards with some degree of force. And after this, examining with a scrutinising hand the other parts of the Body, found it with its nerves and its bones solid, and covered with soft flesh. He also shook it, taking hold of the head, and raised it so high that it almost appeared to sit in its quiet abode. Moreover, that nothing might be wanting in his diligent investigation, he took care to examine into the perfect state of the feet and legs. When therefore the devout searchers had sufficiently, and more

than sufficiently, examined the miracle of its incorruption, raising his voice in the midst, he exclaimed, "Behold, my brethren, this Body lies here, lifeless indeed, but as sound and entire as on the day on which the soul left it to wing its flight to heaven". Then the solemn and jubilant strains of the Te Deum resounded through the vaulted choir and transepts, and the chest containing the Body of the glorious St. Cuthbert was lifted upon the shoulders of the bearers, and with the pomp of a splendid ceremonial, and amidst the tears and rejoicings of the vast crowd which thronged the whole of the church, was borne through the Northern porch.

The various caskets of relics, the remains of the Saints of Lindisfarne went before, and as soon as the venerable Body of the Saint passed into the open air, the vast crowd which thronged every part of the Palace Green from very joy burst into tears and fell prostrate on the ground, rendering it almost impossible for the procession to advance, "whilst," says the anonymous author, "in

honour of the omnipotent God a band of singers scattered their celestial peals on the gale".

The sight was a splendid one (says William of Malmesbury) : the sky was clear, no black clouds deadened the beams of the sun. The monks were all arrayed in the robes of their order, and there were long lines of men going and coming, treading upon each other's heels, from their intense anxiety to view again and again the sacred bier.

The procession made the circuit of the walls of the church, and entering it again advanced to the eastern apse, where the Body was placed in the feretory, on the spot upon which the shrine had been prepared for it. A high mass followed, during which the church re-echoed to the solemn chant of the vast band of choristers, and the people joined with one voice in the sublime liturgy of the Church. When all was concluded, the immense crowd of the faithful returned homewards with joy, "glorifying and praising God, for all those things that they had seen and heard".

This translation took place on the 26th of August, 1104.

Chapter XXXV.

THE FERETORY AND SHRINE.

THE feretory in which the shrine of the Saint was situated, extended the whole width of the church immediately behind the reredos, or french-pier, as it was called, which was afterwards erected at the expense of Lord Neville. It was thirty-seven feet in length, by twenty-three in breadth. It was first of a circular or apsidal form, corresponding with the apse of the Norman Church, but later its termination was made rectangular—when the transept called the Chapel of the Nine Altars was built, in the thirteenth century—above the pavement of which it is raised about six feet. Four doorways give entrance to it—two from the sanctuary, and two from the aisles; one at the north, and the other at the south end of the feretory. In the centre of this space, but nearer to the altar screen than

to the east end, stood the shrine. The only account of its original shape is gained from Reginald, who tells us that it was of stone, and was supported by nine stone pillars, and that lamps were constantly burning around it. In the year 1372, John, Lord Neville of Raby, expended £200 upon a tomb of marble and alabaster for the shrine of St. Cuthbert to rest upon. The work was executed in London, and conveyed by sea to Newcastle at the cost of the donor, and thence to Durham at the expense of the Church.

The omissions of the early historians of the Church have, fortunately, been most abundantly supplied by a later writer, in a work entitled *A Description of the Ancient Monuments, Rites and Customs of the Monastical Church of Durham.*

This most valuable record is quite unique, and by its help we are able to reproduce every feature and every detail of the Abbey Church, as it was before the accession of Henry VIII. In this work the writer gives the following most minute description of the

feretory and its shrine.* "Next to the Nine Altars was the goodly Monument of Saint Cuthbert, adjoininge to the Quire and the High Altar on the west end, reachinge towards the Nine Altars on the east, and toward the North and South containinge the breadth of the Quire, in quadrant forme, in the midst of which his sacred shrine was exalted with most curious workmanshipp of fine and costly marble, all limned and guilted with gold; havinge foure seates or places convenient under the shrine for the pilgrims or laymen (lame or sick men, II. 45), sittinge on their knees to leane and rest on in time of their devout offeringes and fervent prayers to God, and holy Saint Cuthbert for his miraculous releife and succour, whiche beinge never wantinge, made the shrine to bee one of the most sumptuous monuments in all England; so great were the offerings and jeweles that were bestowed uppon it, and no lesse the miracles that were done by it, even in theise latter days, as is more patent in the History

* This book was written in 1593, and an accurate edition of it was published by the Surtees Society in 1842.

of the Church at large. At the west end of this shrine of Saint Cuthbert was a little altar adjoined to it for Masses to be said on, onely uppon the great and holy feast of St. Cuthbert's Day in Lent, at which solemnitie the holy (wholes H. 45) Convent did keepe open household (house H. 45) in the Frater House, and did dine altogether on that day and on no day else in the yeare. And at this feast, and certain other festivall dayes, in the time of divine service, they were accustomed to drawe (up H. 45) the cover of Saint Cuthbert's shrine (being of wainscott), where unto was fastened unto every corner of the said cover, to a loope of iron, a stronge cord, which cord was all fest together over the midst over the cover. And a stronge rope was fest unto the loope or bindinge of the said cordes, which run upp and doune in a pully under the vault which was above over Saint Cuthbert's Feretoire, for the drawinge upp of the cover of the said shrine, and the said rope was fastned to a loope of iron in the north piller of the Feretorie, havinge six silver bells fastned to the said rope, soe as

when the cover of the same was drawinge upp the belles did make such a good sound that itt did stirr all the people's harts that was within the Church to repair unto itt, and to make their praiers to God and holy Saint Cuthbert, and that the behoulders might see the glorrious ornaments thereof. Also the cover had att every corner two ringes made fast, which did runn upp and doune on fower staves of iron, when itt was in drawinge upp, which staves were fast to every corner of the marble that Saint Cuthbert's coffin did lye upon, which cover was all gilded over, and of eyther syde was painted fower lively images curious to the beholders; and on the east end was painted the picture of our Saviour sittinge on a rainbowe to give judgement, very lively to the behoulders; and on the west end of itt was the picture of our Lady and our Saviour on her knee. And on the topp of the cover from end to end was most fyne (brattishing of, Ed. H.) carved worke, cutt oute with dragons and other beasts, most artifically wrought, and the inside was vernished with a fyne sanguine colour that itt

might be more perspicuous to the behoulders; and at every corner of the cover was a locke to keepe itt close, but att such times as was fitt to shew itt (H. 45) that the beholders might see the glorye and ornaments thereof."

Within the feretory, against the north and south walls, there were almeries, richly decorated, containing a large number of precious relics in costly reliquaries, the gifts of kings and queens and nobles to the Saint and the Church. Here also hung against the piers and suspended over the shrine and over the nine altars the banners of the Scotch King, captured at the battle of Neville's Cross, together with the splendid banner of Lord Nevil until the desecration of the tomb and the suppression of the monastery, when they were all taken down, spoiled and defaced.

The sub-prior was appointed Feretrar (or shrine-keeper). It was his office to take charge of the shrine and to keep a record of all receipts and expenses connected with it. He is thus described in the *Rites of Durham*:—

"The master of the feretory's chamber was in the dormitory. His office was, when any man of honour or renown was disposed to offer their prayers to God and St. Cuthbert, or to offer any thing at his shrine, if they requested to have it drawn, or to see it, then the clerk of the feretory (an inferior officer) gave notice to his master, the vice-prior, keeper of the feretory, who brought the keys of the shrine, and gave them to the clerk to open it. His office was to stand by and see it drawn up. It was always drawn up in matins time, when *Te Deum* was singing, or high mass time, or at evensong, when *Magnificat* was sung."

Chapter XXXVI.

THE EPISCOPAL SEE AND ABBEY CHURCH, FROM 1083 TO THE DISSOLUTION.

FROM the year 1083, when they were first introduced by William of St. Calais, until the year 1540, when the larger monasteries were dissolved, a period of 500

years, the Benedictine monks held peaceable possession of the Abbey of Durham. It does not enter into my design to describe what Durham became during all these centuries. The history of Durham and of St. Cuthbert forms a principal part of the history of the North of England. The Prince Bishops were great temporal sovereigns, emulating the power of the kings of England themselves. They had their own courts of chancery, exchequer, and admiralty; they appointed their own chancellor, justices, sheriffs, magistrates, laws, and they possessed the right of coining money, and of pardoning treasons, murders, felonies, and other crimes. The territory of the Bishops was called the "Bishoprick," as distinguished from the rest of England, which was divided into counties. The people of the Bishoprick were distinguished by the name of "Haliwercfolk—a holy-work people," as they constituted the guardians of the sacred body of St. Cuthbert, and were not liable to service outside the limits of the Palatinate. The mitred

Priors of the Monastery were peers of the realm, and had their seats in the House of Lords. The church and monastery under their care, though not governed by an abbot, was entitled to the appellation of Abbey. So great was the reverence for St. Cuthbert that riches poured in upon the Church until it became well-nigh the richest Church in Christendom. Every gift made to the See was considered as given to the Saint, and all the vast possessions in land and money were called the patrimony of St. Cuthbert, and were exempted from all taxes and all jurisdiction, except that of the possessors. Two books were kept upon the high altar—the *Liber Vitæ*, or "Book of Life," containing the names of the benefactors to the Church, and another book, containing a list of the relics, ornaments, and vestments. Some of these gifts were of the most costly description. Richard de Seybrook, who was appointed shrine-keeper in 1383, mentions the following precious jewels, reliquaries, and relics, which were preserved in the almeries:—A copy of the

Gospels, ornamented with gold, with a gilt crucifix; an image of the Blessed Virgin, of silver gilt; a cross of gold, set with precious stones, with a pedestal of silver gilt; a cup of silver gilt, the gift of the Countess of Kent; the ivory sceptre of King Oswald; an *Agnus Dei* in silver; a small enamelled coffer, containing the chasuble of St. Cuthbert, in which he lay in the ground for eleven years at Lindisfarne; the book of the Gospels used by St. Boisil; an ivory casket ornamented with gold and silver, containing the episcopal gloves of St. Cuthbert; the skull of St. Boisil, in a shrine ornamented with silver and gold and divers images; bones of St. Aidan, Eadbert, Egfrid, and Ethelwold, bishops of Lindisfarne; the body of Venerable Bede, priest and doctor.

"Besides that King Richard did give his parliamentary robe of blue velvet wrought with great lines of pure gold, a marvellous rich cope, and another cope of cloth of gold was given to the same church by another prince, so great was the goodly mind of kings

and queens and other great people for the love and great devotion that they had to God and St. Cuthbert in that church. In a word, it was accounted the richest church in all the land—in jewels and relics and ornaments."

The services of the church, too, were carried out with the greatest splendour and decorum. Many of the great functions are described by the author of the invaluable record to which I have more than once referred, and there is amongst the Chapter documents a most interesting letter written by King Henry the Sixth, who came on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Cuthbert on the 26th of September, 1448. Three days after his arrival in Durham he attended the vespers, procession, and High Mass in the Cathedral, on the feast of St. Michael, the Archangel, which happened to fall on a Sunday. On his return homewards he wrote from Lincoln to "Master John Somerset" to express his admiration for the way in which the services in the Cathedral were carried out.

"Right trusty, and well beloved, wee greet you hartly well, letting you witt, that blessed

be our Lord God, we have been right merry in our pilgramage, considering III. causes, one is how that the Church of ye province of York and diocesse of Durham be as nobill in doing of divine service, in multitude of ministers, and in sumptuous and glorious buildinge as anie in our realme. And alsoe how our Lord has radicate in the people His faith and His law, and that they be as Catholike people as ever wee came among, and all good and holy, that we dare say the first commandement may be riefied right well in them 'Diligunt Dominum Deum ipsorum ex totis animis suis, ex tota mente suâ'. Wryten in oure citty of Lincolne in crastino S. Lucæ, Evang., 1448."

Many interesting narratives are recorded in connection with the tomb of St. Cuthbert, and Reginald, the monk of Durham, has written an elaborate work on the admirable virtues and the marvellous graces and miraculous cures obtained through the intercession of the Saint. This record embraces the period extending from the conquest to the reign of Edward I. I will make a selection of them

which appear to be the most interesting and edifying.

I have already referred to the campaign undertaken by William the Conqueror in order to reduce the brave Northmen to obedience. Two years later the King, after a successful inroad into Scotland, on his return southward, took up his quarters for a brief period in Durham, and whilst there he laid the foundations of its famous castle. During his stay he naturally became much interested in the history of St. Cuthbert, and made diligent enquiries as to whether the Body of the Saint really rested in the Cathedral or not. In spite of the assertions of all the members of the church, which were attested on oath, the King was slow to believe, and at length resolved to satisfy himself of the truth or falsehood of the story, openly threatening that he would put to the sword the dignitaries of the Church if the Body could not be found. They were all seized with terror, and had recourse to God to help them through the merits of his servant Cuthbert. The festival of All Saints was appointed by the King for

the inspection of the tomb, and during the High Mass, which was celebrated by the Bishop, the King was suddenly seized with a violent fever of so severe a nature that he rushed from the church, mounted his horse and never drew bridle until he had crossed the Tees. Tradition says that he rode in his flight down the little street called Dun Cow Lane, and crossed the Wear by the King's Ford.

In an original charter preserved in the Treasury of the Dean and Chapter, there is an account given in his own words of a miraculous cure obtained by the intercession of St. Cuthbert, by Thomas, Archbishop of York, A.D. 1090.

"We," he writes, "having been for two years chastised by the scourge of God, and dried up by fever and faintness after an incredible manner, when all physicians held out to us nothing but death, when all the while there was nothing which they could devise to sooth our pains, being warned by a vision, I spent a whole night before the tomb of St. Cuthbert, groaning and wailing, and

having, from excess of disease and fatigue, fallen into a hasty sleep, there stood before me, in a vision, Saint Cuthbert himself, who touching with his hand my limbs, one after another, and rapidly passing over the diseased parts of my body, straightway roused me from sleep and restored me to health."

The next event which I shall mention took place in 1346. In that year was fought the memorable battle of Neville's Cross, within sight of the walls of Durham. In the night before the battle was begun, the 17th day of October, 1346, there appeared to John Fosser, then Prior of the Abbey, a vision commanding him to take the holy corporax cloth, "which was within the corporax wherewith St. Cuthbert covered the chalice when he used to say mass; and to put the same holy relique upon a spear point, and next morning to repair to a place on the west of the city, called the Red Hills, and there to remain until the end of the battle". The monks obeyed the admonition of their Patron, and stood during the whole of the day on the spot where the cross now stands,

and, whilst the archers of St. Cuthbert swept down the Scottish men-at-arms, on their knees prayed for the success of the English army. After the glorious victory gained by the English, the captured banners and pennons of the Scots were carried with great solemnity into the church, and hung above the shrine of St. Cuthbert, to whose prayers the English army was indebted for its success. It was shortly after this battle that the Prior caused a most sumptuous banner to be made to hold the corporal of St. Cuthbert. It was mounted upon silver rods, and the main pole of silver was surmounted by a silver cross at the top. This banner more than once appeared in the field of battle, always assuring victory to the English. It was carried by the men of the palatinate before Edward the First, at Berwick-on-Tweed, and, for the last time, once again at the head of the men of arms of the Nevilles and Percies, in the glorious but ill-fated insurrection of the Northumbrians, known as the Pilgrimage of Grace, against the atrocious tyranny of Henry VIII., in 1556. It was

also borne in procession on great festivals, attended by a clerk in surplice and four attendants. Such was the great monastic Church of Durham, down to the last month of the year 1540.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

DESECRATION OF THE SHRINE.

EVIL days were now in store for England. The lust and avarice of the impious King Henry VIII., had driven him to separate England from the centre of unity, and to covet the rich treasures with which the piety of his predecessors and noble Englishmen, had for centuries enriched the Church of God. In 1536 all the lesser monasteries which were dependent upon Durham—Holy Island, Farne, Jarrow, Wearmouth, Finchale, Lytham, Stamford, and her college at Oxford had been confiscated and annihilated by the act 27th of Henry VIII., and now the blow fell upon the venerated mother of them all, which, enthroned on her regal site, had borne the

honours of well nigh 500 years upon her brow.

On the 31st day of December, 1540, the Prior and Convent were compelled to surrender their church and monastery and all their possessions into the hands of the crown.

The Royal Commissioners came to Durham sometime in the course of the year 1540, and commenced the work of sacrilege by the plunder of the shrine. I will give an account of their proceedings in the words of the compiler of the *Rites of Durham.* My readers will agree with me that nothing could exceed the savage brutality of those miscreants.

"The sacred shrine of St. Cuthbert was defaced at the visitation held at Durham for demolishing such monuments, by Dr. Lee, Dr. Henly, and Mr. Blithman. They found many valuable and goodly jewels, especially one precious stone, which, by the estimate of these visitors and their skilful lapidaries, was of value sufficient to redeem a prince. After the spoil of his ornaments and jewels they approached near to his Body, expecting noth-

ing but dust and ashes; but perceiving the chest he lay in strongly bound with iron, the goldsmith, with a smith's great fore (forge) hammer, broke it open, when they found him lying whole, uncorrupt, with his face bare, and his beard as of a fortnight's growth, and all the vestments about him, as he was accustomed to say Mass, and his metwand of gold lying by him. When the goldsmith perceived he had broken one of his legs he was sore troubled at it and cried, 'Alas, I have broken one of his legs!' which Dr. Henly hearing, called to him, and bade him cast down his bones. The other answered, he could not get them asunder, for the sinews and skin held them so that they would not separate. Then Dr. Lee stept up to see if it were so, and turning about, spake in Latin to Dr. Henly, that he was entire, though Dr. Henly, not believing his words, called again to have them cast down. Dr. Lee answered, if you will not believe me come up yourself and see him. Then Dr. Henly stept up to him, and handled him, and found he lay whole; then he commanded them to take

him down ; and so it happened, contrary to their expectation, that not only his Body was whole and uncorrupted, but the vestments wherein his Body lay, and wherein he was accustomed to say Mass, were fresh, safe, and not consumed. Whereupon the visitors commanded him to be carried into the re-vestry, till the King's pleasure concerning him was further known ; and upon the receipt thereof the prior and monks buried him in the ground under the place, where his shrine was exalted."

There is another account of the same transaction given in a MS. in the library of the Dean and Chapter of Durham, entitled, "The origin and succession of the Bishops of Durham," written immediately after the death of Bishop Tunstall in 1559.

"It is to be remembered, that in the time of King Henry VIII., the sepulcre of St. Cuthbert, by certaine Commissioners of the said King, was opened, and the holy corpes of St. Cuthbert, with all things about the same, was found incorrupted, whole, sound sweete, odoreferous, and flexable ; the same

was taken up, carryed into the Revestrie, vewed, touched, and searched by sundry persons, both of the clergye and others, and afterwards laid in a new coffin of wood ; of which premisses many eye-witnesses were of very late, and some are yet, liveing." *

These testimonies to the incorrupt condition of the Body are decisively confirmed by that of Harpsfield, Archdeacon of Canterbury, during the reign of Queen Mary. At the time of the desecration of the shrine of St. Cuthbert, he was a fellow of New Hall, Oxford. In his *Historia Anglicana Ecclesiastica* he gives a most minute account of the condition of the Body of the Saint when the shrine was broken open and defaced. " When, by command of King Henry the Eighth, the coffins of the saints were everywhere throughout England plundered and broken to pieces, and their remains thrown into places of disgrace, there was broken also the wooden coffin of this holy Body, which was cased in white marble. And when he, who was deputed to dissipate and break in pieces the

* Raine's *St. Cuthbert*, p. 175.

sepulchre, had aimed a heavy blow at the coffin, the blow fell upon the very Body of the Saint, and wounded its leg, and of this wound the flesh gave presently a manifest proof. When this appeared, and at the same time the perfectness of the whole body, unless the prominent part of the nose, I know not why, was wanting, an account of the proceeding was laid before Cuthbert Tunstall, then Bishop of Durham, and he was requested to give orders as to what he wished to be done with the Body. In consequence, by his command, a grave was made in the ground, in that very spot previously occupied by his precious coffin, and there the Body was deposited. And not only his Body, but even the vestments in which it was clothed, were perfectly entire and free from all taint and decay. There was upon his finger a ring of gold,* ornamented with a sapphire, which I

* The ring mentioned by Harpsfield came into the possession of Thomas Watson, Catholic Dean of Durham, in the reign of Queen Mary, in 1557. He was made Bishop of Lincoln, but was deprived of his see by Queen Elizabeth in the following year. By him the ring was given to Anthony Brown, Viscount Montacute, so created by

myself once saw and handled, and as it were a certain divine relic, more precious than any treasure, I clasped it in a marvellous fashion and kissed it. There were present, among others, when this sacred Body was exposed to daylight, Doctor Whitehead, the president of the monastery, Doctor Sparke, Doctor Tod, and William Wilan, the keeper of the sacred shrine. And thus it is abundantly manifest that the Body of St. Cuthbert remained inviolate and uncontaminated eight hundred and forty years."

Queen Mary in 1554. By this nobleman it was given to Dr. Richard Smith, Bishop of Chalcedon, who mentions these facts in his *Flores Historiæ Anglicanæ*.

Alban Butler states, in his *Life of St. Cuthbert*, March 20, that Bishop Smith gave the ring to the English Canonesses at Paris. In their hands it remained until the year 1858, when Cardinal Wiseman was fortunate enough to obtain it for St. Cuthbert's College at Ushaw. It was presented by the Cardinal to the College on the occasion of the Jubilee Day, 21st of July, 1858. It is preserved in a costly reliquary, and is worn by the Bishop of the Diocese when he ordains at the College.

Chapter XXXVIII.

ST. CUTHBERT'S BODY PLACED IN A NEW GRAVE UNDER THE PLACE WHERE THE SHRINE STOOD.

THE shrine was finally removed in November, 1541, by John Symson, who was paid two shillings for four days' work. We learn also from the records of the Chapter that the vault in which the Body of the Saint was buried was begun about the 28th of December, 1541, and finished together with the marble slab which covers it, soon after the Epiphany, at an expense of thirteen shillings and elevenpence.

There are certain points in the above narratives which are difficult to reconcile with some of the statements made by Reginald, in his account of the appearance of St. Cuthbert's Body at the translation in 1104; but two facts seem to be undoubtedly established, viz., that the Body of the Saint was incorrupt, and that it was buried in a grave made to receive it, under the place where his shrine had stood

for so many hundred years. There is no record come down to us that the vault was opened or the Body of St. Cuthbert disturbed from this date until the year 1827.

Chapter XXXIX.

THE VAULT OPENED IN THE YEAR 1827.

ON the 17th of May, 1827, the grave was opened in the presence of two of the prebendaries of the Cathedral and the Rev. J. Raine. The last named published a quarto volume giving a most minute and detailed account of the proceedings. This work displays great research, and contains most curious and valuable information; but it is much to be regretted that the intense bigotry—I can use no other word—and violent animus of the writer detract from its merit. His sole aim seems to have been to convict the monks of a gross and most wicked imposture, maintained for centuries, in order to enrich themselves and aggrandise their church.

It is not my intention to follow Mr. Raine

into all the elaborate details of what took place on the occasion of this investigation. It is sufficient for my purpose to state that at the bottom of the third coffin or chest discovered in the grave was found a skeleton, lying with its feet to the east, swathed apparently in one or more shrouds of linen or silk, through which there projected, in their respective places, the bone of the skull and the lower part of the leg bones.

Were these the remains of St. Cuthbert? Though it is impossible to give a conclusive answer to this question, yet my readers will expect me to say something on a matter of such surpassing interest to us all. I will, therefore, venture to put together certain facts and inferences which may assist them in forming their own conclusions.

First of all we must remark that it may be taken as historically certain that the Body of St. Cuthbert was buried in this grave under the spot where the shrine had stood, within three years after the sacrilegous spoliation by the Commissioners of Henry VIII. This was done, according to the state-

ment made by the author of the *Rites of Durham*, by order of the King, but Harpsfield says, by the direction of Bishop Tunstall. In the library of the Dean and Chapter at Durham, there hangs, framed in oak, the original bill for making the vault or grave in which the Body of the Saint was deposited. The question of the identity of the skeleton found by Raine seems, therefore, to be reduced to this—was the grave opened and the Body removed at any period subsequent to this burial?

Chapter XL.

TRADITIONS AS TO THE REMOVAL OF THE SACRED RELICS.

1. The Secular Tradition.

TWO traditions have come down to us which affirm that the Body had been removed. The first of these, which may be called the *secular* tradition, is contained in a document now in my possession. This document measures 7 inches by 3 inches in size,

and the paper, brown with age, and writing are at least as old as the first half of the seventeenth century. The following are the exact words of the inscription: "Subter Gradus saxeos (secundũ, et tertiũ) Clymacis ascendentis et ducentis erga turrẽ campanorũ in Templo Cathedrali Civitatis Dunelmensis ppe horologiũ grande quod locatur in angulo Australi Fani ejusdem, sepultus jacet Thesaurus pretiosus (Corpus St. Cuthberti)". It may be thus translated: "Beneath the second and third stone Steps of the Staircase ascending and leading to the tower in which are the bells in the Cathedral Church of the City of Durham, near to the great clock, which is situated in the Southern transept of the Church, lies buried the precious Treasure (the Body of St. Cuthbert)".

Attached to the back of the document is a slip of paper, also much discoloured by age, containing a note, supposed to be in the handwriting of Bishop Maire, who was one of my predecessors at Durham, and Co-adjutor to Bishop Petre, Vicar-Apostolic of the Northern District. Bishop Maire was consecrated in 1725, and died in 1766,

before Bishop Petre. The following are the words of his note :

"The place where St. Cuthbert's shrine stood is very well known, and there are marks in the flags made by the feet of those who made their reverence as they passed by, on both sides, conspicuous to this day. And the place where his body is deposited in the cathedral is known to three monks only, who take care to keep a succession."

This tradition seems to have been handed down through the Vicars-Apostolic of the Northern District, or the priests of Durham, and after the death of Bishop Maire, fell into the hands of Mr. Swinburne. By him it was restored to Bishop Hogarth, the first Bishop of Hexham in the reconstructed hierarchy. A copy had, however, been given to his son at Gateshead, by Mr. Swinburne, and by him it was shown to the late Archdeacon Prest, who induced the Dean and Chapter to allow the spot indicated to be examined. Dean Waddington courteously invited my predecessor at Durham, the late Provost Platt, and myself

to be present at the examination. After the second and third and other stone steps of the staircase had been lifted, and a thin layer of earth removed, the workmen soon came to the foundation of solid concrete upon which the walls were built. This was so hard that the pick-axes made but little impression upon it; and after with great labour penetrating a few feet, it was found to be impossible to excavate more than a narrow hole, which was carried down, gradually contracting, to a depth of about seven feet. It was satisfactorily ascertained that no coffin or human body could possibly have been buried there, and those most interested in the truth of the tradition were forced to acknowledge that it had been finally disposed of.

2. The Benedictine Tradition.

The other tradition, known as the *Benedictine*, because handed down in that body, differs from the secular tradition, though Bishop Maire would seem to have thought them identical. Curiously enough, it is first

referred to in the 17th century, the very date of the document containing the secular tradition.

The first mention of it is made in very obscure terms by Father Cressy, who was professed at St. Gregory's College, Douay, on the 22nd of August, 1649, the first year of the Commonwealth. Speaking of St. Cuthbert's Body in his *Church History*, he says: "The Body of St. Cuthbert remained (in the Cathedral of Durham) incorrupt for many hundred years, till the unhappy days of King Henry VIII. And no doubt, it *continues so to this time in the hands of some devout Catholics*, it is to be hoped, secure from the outrages of Calvinistic enemies, more envenomed against God's saints than the heathenish Danes themselves."

The second notice of this tradition occurs in a MS. work preserved in the library of Downside College, entitled, *Annus Sacer Brittannicus* by Father Anselm Mannock. In the life of St. Cuthbert, he writes: "When in King Henry's time the shrine (of St. Cuth-

bert) was defaced, the monks removed it to a more secret place, and there it still remains, known only to three monks, who are bound to perpetual secrecy. I had it from one of the three in the secret, about the year 1730, named Father Casse."

Upon this I may remark that the statement of Father Mannock contradicts the historical evidence given above, that the Body of St. Cuthbert was, after the dissolution, buried in the feretory; and it also differs from the account furnished to Dr. Lingard in 1828, by Father Gregory Robinson, the Benedictine Provincial of the North, to the following effect:—

"According to the tradition which has descended to the Benedictines, the Body of St. Cuthbert was buried under the shrine in the reign of Henry VIII., and was taken up again during the reign of Queen Mary.* The Catholic clergy, previous to their expulsion by Queen Elizabeth, buried many

* If this statement is correct, it might explain the reason for the erection of the screen which was put up round the feretory in the reign of Queen Mary.

things which they esteemed sacred in the vault under the place where the shrine had stood, but for greater security deposited the Saint's Body in a vault in a different part of the church, and the secret was communicated to the restorers of the English Benedictine congregation by some of those who had been actually employed in this removal. The spot itself is distinctly marked in a plan of the cathedral* which they keep, but that spot they are under an oath of secrecy not to disclose."

It is evident from these two statements that no reliance can be placed upon the Benedictine tradition as to the *time* of the supposed removal of the Body of St. Cuthbert, and I must candidly avow my opinion that the fact of such removal appears to me to rest upon a very slight foundation.

It is undoubtedly difficult to account for the origin and existence of this time-honoured

* Father Allanson, who was Provincial, and in possession of the secret, stated to me—(1) That if such a plan ever existed, it had disappeared; (2) That the secret is no longer binding under oath.

tradition, which, as I have shown, dates back to the year 1640, but the difficulties in the way of accepting it are still greater.

The Body of St. Cuthbert was carefully and securely buried in the grave prepared for it in 1545, by the prior and monks themselves. Why should they again disturb the remains of the Saint?

As the prior and five of the monks separated themselves from their brethren, and were appointed Dean and Canons of the newly-elected Chapter, the foundation charter of which is dated 12th of May, 1541, and must have taken the oath of supremacy to King Henry, it does not seem probable that, supposing them to have removed the Body of St. Cuthbert a second time, they would communicate the secret of the removal to the monks or to any members of the order from which they had seceded. Nor is it credible that they could have made it known to the restorers of the English Benedictine congregation, which event did not take place until fifty years later.

It is stated that the Body of St. Cuthbert

was taken out of the grave during the reign of Queen Mary. This does not appear to have been part of the original tradition, but simply an addition of Dr. Robinson's, who was then aware of the fact of the burial of the Body during King Henry's time. If however this be accepted as true, it seems unaccountable that no record of a fact which must have been public and well known, should have come down to us, and that there should be no reference to it in the archives of the cathedral Chapter. As to the plan of the cathedral, said to be in the possession of the Benedictine body, I have the authority of the late Father Allanson for stating that the only plan, if it can be so called, is a pen-and-ink sketch of the cathedral made in 1800, and transmitted in a letter from Father Pembridge, a Benedictine, to Dr. Brewer, the Provincial, dated 14th of November, 1800.

And now let us weigh the evidence in favour of the discovery of the relics of the Saint in 1827. I will simply state the points which are difficult to evade.

(1) We commence with the historical fact

that the Body of the Saint was certainly placed in the year, 1542, in the vault opened in 1827.

(2) There is no evidence whatever to show that the grave was ever opened before 1827. Much stress has been laid upon a statement made by Raine, in his *St. Cuthbert*, respecting the opening in the masonry at the end of the grave, which was filled up with loose stones. Now, what is said by Raine is simply this. After describing the finished and workmanlike masonry of the rest of the vault, he goes on to say that "the same pains did not appear to have been taken with the *one* or *two* middle stones in the *upper* course at the foot of the grave". The clerk of the works, Mr. Fairclough, who was present, supposed that the space occupied by these stones was left open for the admission of levers, used in placing the large stone slab which covered the grave. Dr. Lingard is of opinion that this opening was made to allow of relics and other valuables to be placed in the vault by the Catholic prebendaries, who were aware of their approaching ejection in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The opinions of our great English historian are

always entitled to respect; but if such valuables had been conveyed into the tomb, how was it they were not discovered when the tomb was opened in 1827? Of what value this small opening can be as bearing upon the question of the removal of the Body of St. Cuthbert, I have always been at a loss to discover, as no one can surely imagine that it would be possible to extract the Body, encased in three heavy wooden coffins—one of which was new in 1542—through such an opening at the end of the upper course of masonry described by Raine.

(3) The appearance of the vault, the beautiful finished masonry, the careful way in which it had been covered up by two separate slabs, one of stone, the other of marble, between which a space of nearly twenty inches had been filled in by a regular layer of earth, make it extremely improbable that the grave had ever been disturbed, so as to admit of the removal of its sacred deposit.

(4) The coffin or chest in which the skeleton reposed was undoubtedly that in which St. Cuthbert's Body was placed at Lindisfarne,

when it was enshrined on the right side of the altar in 698, eleven years after his death.

This coffin is most minutely described by Reginald and the Anonymous Monk. It was of oak, and the whole of its external surface was carved with very admirable engravings of minute and most delicate workmanship. In small and circumscribed tracts or compartments, there were beasts, flowers, and images or figures engrafted, engraved, or furrowed in the wood. The coffin found in 1827 is covered exactly with similar engravings, as still may be seen on the fragments preserved in the library of the Dean and Chapter.

(5) The ornamental silk wrappings in which the skeleton was enveloped corresponded with those which enclosed the Body of the Saint in 1104.

(6) The stole and maniple found on the skeleton, of rich and most exquisite material and workmanship, correspond with those which were presented to the shrine of St. Cuthbert, at Chester-le-Street, by King Athelstan, in 934.

(7) The portable altar of oak, covered with

plates of silver, and the ivory comb and linen bag found in the vault were identical in form and material with those seen in the coffin at the translation, in 1104.*

(8) Reginald describes the face of the Saint as seen beneath the cloth which closely covered it. "His nose," he says, "at its junction with his forehead, seemed to be turned somewhat rapidly outwards, and the tip of the lower bone appeared to be furrowed with a line of division, which was so deep that a finger might be almost laid in the cavity." Now, the skull of the skeleton had these characteristic features in a very marked degree.

With these remarks I leave the whole matter in the hands of my readers, to form their own judgments on the question at issue. The fact that only a *skeleton* was found in no way disproves the testimony of so many witnesses, who had not only seen, but handled the sacred remains, that the Body of the

* These relics are all carefully preserved in a glass case in the Library of the Dean and Chapter at Durham, and are most minutely described by Raine, in his *St. Cuthbert.*

Saint was incorrupt for about a thousand years. Not only the monks, who might be considered as interested, but a large number of distinguished clergy and laity—some of whom were hostile—and, last of all, the Commissioners of King Henry, all bear witness to this fact. What difficulty is there in believing that when His servant ceased to be treated with honour and veneration, and his miraculous state no longer inspired the devotion of the people, God should have permitted his Body to fall into decay!

Whatever may be our judgment on the results of the examination made in 1827, from our hearts we detest and repudiate the attempt to blacken the characters of the clergy of Durham. We denounce "that religious bigotry which eagerly believes the most incredible tales, provided they only tend to disgrace the churchmen of old". Of one thing at least we may be sure, and no one has ever thought of denying it,—the sacred Body of our great patron still reposes within the walls of his cathedral at Durham.

And now it is time for me to end. I have

endeavoured to tell my readers all that is known about St. Cuthbert, and have traced his life from his childhood on the banks of the Tweed to his death on the solitary ocean-bound Farne, and have given the history of the fortunes of his venerable relics, from the time they were borne forth from the cell in which he breathed his last, until they were safely consigned to the magnificent shrine in the cathedral built by William of St. Carileph. I can say with confidence that any toil which I may have undergone in this work, undertaken and carried out in the midst of many distractions and frequent indisposition, will be more than repaid, if I have succeeded in making St. Cuthbert better known and more devoutly loved.

Chapter XLI.

FESTIVAL OF ST. CUTHBERT IN 1448 AND 1887—A CONTRAST.

I AM writing this on the feast of St. Cuthbert in the ancient city of Durham. Before we part, let me invite my readers to go

back with me four hundred years and more, and let us awake on the morning of the 20th of March, 1448, the very year that King Henry VI. visited Durham, and when the abbey church seems to have attained its greatest splendour. From the earliest dawn the whole city is astir and alive with excitement. The bells of all the churches are ringing out their loudest and most joyous peals, for the young men of Durham were famous, as Reginald tells us, for their skill as bellringers. St. Nicholas', St. Giles', St. Margaret's, and St. Oswald's, and our Lady's two churches in the Bailey, are vying with each other which shall pour forth their loudest and more sonorous tones ; and overhead, and resounding above all the rest, the great bells of the Galilee steeple, "never rung but at principal feasts," and of the majestic lantern, are flinging their full notes of melody over the waters of the Wear. When we emerge into the streets, we find them filled with a huge crowd, through which, with difficulty, we make our way. The trades' guildsmen are marshalling their ranks. The silversmiths, the saddlers,

and fleshers, from the streets which still bear their names, and all the other companies and "occupations," with their emblems and "their banners, with all the lightes apperteyninge to these several banners," were marching in order to the abbey gates.

Every city parish church is sending out its choristers and clerics and its parishioners headed by the processional cross and the banner of its patron Saint, and from all the neighbouring towns and villages come similar processions. The deans and canons of the collegiate churches at Chester-le-Street and Lanchester, Auckland and Darlington, clad in their flowing linen surplices and ermined amyces, with the Chapter crosses borne before them, are advancing up the steep from Framwellgate Bridge. Bishops, earls, and barons, with their bands of liveried retainers and men-at-arms, have left their castles to take part in the great festival.

When we enter the church through the north porch, we find it all ablaze with light and splendour. Banners are floating from every pier; the seven-and-twenty altars are

decked in their most sumptuous attire, and before each stands a priest, in richly embroidered chasuble, offering to God the adorable Sacrifice; whilst kneeling around, is a devout concourse of men and women, eager to receive the most blessed Sacrament.

In the Galilee chapel, which we turn aside to visit, the altar of Our Lady, with its sumptuous reredos, "devised and furnished with most heavenly pictures," raised but a few years before by Cardinal Langley, and where "Our Ladie's Masse was sung dailie," is most richly adorned with flowers and lights, and "its sumptuous and gorgyous furniture; and the altars of Our Lady of Pittie in the north aisle, and of St. Bede in the south, are also clothed for high festival; and standing before his altar, is the shrine of Venerable Bede," with its "cover of wainescott drawn up to showe the sumptuosness thereof". From thence let us pass up the great nave, and before us stands, stretching across betwixt two of the giant pillars "supporting and holding up the west syde of the Lanterne," the Jesus altar with its high stone reredos,

and over the altar, against the wall, "a moste curiouse and fine table with eleven leaves to open and close again (like those beautiful trypticks so common in German churches), all the hole passion of our Lord Jesus Christ most richlye and curiously sett forth in most lyvelie coulors, all like the burninge gold, as He was tormented, and as He hunge on the cross". "On the height of the walls behind this altar, from pillar to pillar, is the whole storie and passion of our Lord wroughte in stone, most curiously and most fynely gilte; and on the height above all, upon the reredos, standes the most goodly and famous roodes that was in all the land, with the picture of Marie on the one syde, and the picture of John on the other, with two splendent and glisteninge archangels, one on the syde of Mary, and the other on the syde of John." Passing through the doors on each side of the Jesus altar, we see before us, across the Lantern, the great stone screen of the shrine, filled with its gilt statues of the kings and queens of England and Scotland who had been devout and

goodly founders and benefactors of this famous church. Through the open door we obtain a view of the glorious choir, with its rows of exquisitely carved stalls, and its magnificent high altar, behind which stretches across the whole breadth the matchless screen—the gift of the Nevilles—filled from top to bottom with its glittering images of alabaster, and emblazoned all over with the Nevilles' crest—the cross and bullhead—"Silver saltire upon martial red".

The high altar, "the goodliest and most statelye altar," as is fitting, in all the church, is now clothed in its most precious and costly ornaments, in preparation for the solemn mass, "quasi sponsa ornata viro suo". Before it we reverently bend our knees in adoration, "for three marvellous faire silver basins or lamps hung in chains of silver 'above the steps of the altar,' and ever burning both day and night in token that the house is always watchinge to God," proclaim that in that rich and most sumptuous canopie suspended over the holy table, "whereon did stand a pelican, all of silver verye finely gilded,

givinge his blood to his younge ones, in token that Christ did give His blood for the sins of the world, is a marveillous faire Pyx, of most fine gold, most curiously wrought of goldsmith worke," in which is the treasure of the church, the most Blessed Sacrament.

After paying this short visit to our blessed Lord, we follow the dense crowd which is streaming along the north aisle, past the Blacke Roode of Scotland, containing a portion of the cross of our Lord and encased in its costly reliquary of solid silver taken from the Scots at the battle of Neville's Cross, and ascend the steps into the feretory. St. Cuthbert's shrine stands before us, fully exposed to view with all its priceless gems and offerings. Innumerable lamps and tapers burn around it, and at an altar which adjoins the tomb at the west end, "upon this great festival of St. Cuthbert only," a priest is saying Mass. All the almeries are open, and display the wonderful collection of the relics of many saints, in their richly enamelled reliquaries of gold and silver, "most marvellously chased and jewelled," and all the gifts

and jewels accounted to be the most sumptuous and richest jewels in all the land.

Above the heads of the devout kneeling throng, the captured Ancient and banner of King David of Scotland, the banner of the Nevilles, and of other nobles, presented to St. Cuthbert's shrine after the battle of Neville's Cross, wave to and fro; and conspicuous among them is the banner of St. Cuthbert, the glorious ensign of the church.

After paying our devotions to God and His servant, we rise to make way for others; but before we descend once more into the church, let us glance between the brattishing which surrounds the east and portions of the north and south sides of the feretory, with its row of iron candlesticks "which have lights set in them to give light to the monks when they said Mass at the Nine Altars," and we shall see at each altar a priest offering the holy Sacrifice, and hundreds of devout worshippers filling the broad space of the eastern transept, itself a noble church.

And now the time has come for the crowning act of the day, the solemn High Mass,

and the great bell of the lantern announces the hour. As its last stroke falls upon the ear, the "paire of organs" in the choir burst forth, and from the arched door of the revestry in the south aisle, issues forth a goodly procession, headed by the monastic cross of gold, "and the staffe that it did stand on, to beare it withall, is all of silver and goldsmith worke, very curiously and finely wrought and double gilt". Choristers and acolytes, and then the monks in all "the riche copes that were in the church, as every monk had one," walked two abreast. These were followed by deans and canons of collegiate churches, and the priors and abbots of neighbouring monasteries, and behind them came the Lord Prior of Durham, "in a marvellous rich cope of clothe of ffyne pure gould, the which he was not able to goe upright with it, for the weightines thereof, but men did staye it and holde it up of every side, with his crutch in his hand, which was of sylver and duble gilt, with a rich myter on his head". Then came the "epistoler and gospeller (deacon and sub-deacon) in tunick

and dalmatic, and the deacons and assistant chaplains, wearing the magnificent copes, one of blue velvet, wrought with great lions of pure gold, his own royal mantle given to the church by King Richard, and the other of cloth of gold, the gift of another royal prince"; and last of all, the Prince Bishop himself, Robert Neville—son of Ralph, Earl of Westmoreland and of the daughter of John of Gaunt—vested for Mass, his train borne by a band of youthful scions of the great northern barons, Hilton, Lumley, and Eure, amongst whom the heir of the proud house of Neville held a chief place. On arriving at the altar, the bishop intones the "Gloria in Excelsis," and the great and solemn rite proceeds to its termination. When all is finished, the guests are all royally entertained in the Frater House, for on this great festival of their patron, "the prior and the whole convent did keepe open house, and did dine altogether on that day, and on no day else in the year". And so ends this great festival, which is of obligation throughout the

bishopric; and at once the whole scene vanishes like the baseless fabric of a vision, and—

> "What seemed corporal, melted
> As breath into the wind,"

and we find ourselves standing alone in the solitary Palace Green, on the 20th day of March, in the year 1887.

The old city lies at our feet, still and dormant. No sound gives token of high festal! We push aside the heavy curtain and enter the cathedral. We cannot sign ourselves with the blessed water from the marble stoup which stood against the great pier facing the north porch, the emblem of the purity and internal cleanliness with which men should enter God's house, for long ago it was converted into a kitchen sink by a quondam Dean of Durham. The solemn nave stands before us, stately and cold, but where are the crowds which on this day filled it to overflowing? As we advance, we seek in vain for any sign of that festival, the celebration of which our imagination has recalled. There are neither lights, nor in-

cense, nor silken banners. Rood screens and reredos, and the images, glowing with gold and colour, of the Holy Mother of God and His Saints, have been clean swept away. The altars upon which, from early dawn until midday, the Saving Victim was offered, have been cast down, and the anointed slabs used to pave the floor or broken to pieces to mend the roads.

The shrines of St. Cuthbert and St. Bede, and the relics of "men and women saints of God," have been desecrated, and their rich treasures of gold and jewels squandered in luxury and debauchery. The banner of St. Cuthbert, the glorious royal standard of the church and bishopric, has been cast into the fire by a wife of a dean of the cathedral chapter. We look into the choir, but not through the door of the exquisite screen. It was some time before the year 1660 ruthlessly and wantonly destroyed by puritanical violence. The silver lamps which hung before the high altar are no longer there, and alas! that Divine Presence, which, from Its pyx of gold, filled all the church with grace, and light,

and sanctity, has been cast out with contumely and sacrilegious insult.

There is no longer an altar, nor priest, nor sacrifice;* but in their place the words of that unvarying, formal, and chilling service, which even the chanting of a carefully selected and highly trained choir cannot render attractive, falls depressingly on the ear. Speak to any of those who minister there, and they do not know, and do not care to know, that to-day is the chief festival of the great Patron of this church.

All that remains is the material edifice, still passing fair to look at, but it is "the loveliness in death". Its majestic proportions remain, but the glory of the King's Daughter which is within, has departed from it!

> "'Tis Greece, but *living* Greece no more;
> So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,
> We start, for soul is wanting there!"

* In the reign of Queen Elizabeth when the poor Catholic people were asked why they would not go to Church, they replied: "There is neither Priest, Altar, nor Sacraments, as hath been aforetime". (Records of Lord Mayor's Court at York, 1573. See *Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers*, Third Series, p. 235.

There is only one consolation left to us, when blight and desolation have fallen on all else : the sacred relics of our venerable Bishop and Father still repose within its walls and under its vaulted roof. He is reigning with Christ, but his affectionate tender heart still burns with love for his flock, his "angel's face," as Bede speaks, now bright with the reflection of the beatific vision, looks down upon us, and his anointed hands are lifted up to bless and plead for us.

Let us then kneel down upon the marble slab above which his Body was reverently enshrined for 500 years, and invoke him in the words of that collect which to-day has been recited at every Catholic altar in dear England, and was on this his feast most solemnly chanted from the high altar at our side.

PRAYER.

Deus, qui per inestimabile munus gratiæ tuæ Sanctos tuos gloriosos, facis esse ; præsta quæsumus ; ut interviente beato Cuthberto, confessore tuo atque Pontifice, mereamur ad culmen virtutum pervenire, per Dominum.

O God, who by the priceless gift of Thy grace dost render Thy Saints glorious, grant, we beseech Thee that by the intercession of Blessed Cuthbert, Thy Bishop and Confessor, we may rise to the perfection of every virtue, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

4430
270.05
C.972

CONSITT Ed

AUTHOR

Life of St Cuthbert

TITLE

DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME	ROOM NUMBER
3-1449	Chepstow	123
	Sabbath	
	Stewart	
	Green ODSP 1447	

SEP 17 1964
NOV 1